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EXPERIENCE AND THE IDEAL

A STUDY OF THE OLD AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LYRIC

by

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to discover the roots of native English lyric. Such a lyric has been obscured by the introduction of a wholly Christianised European civilisation at the beginning of the Middle Ages. This medieval culture purposefully ignores the song previously extant and struggling for expression. It has, therefore, bequeathed a gap, and a very real one, between two lyrical songs, a gap dependent on the antagonistic purposes of the two cultures producing these songs.

The value of Old English lyric, a lyric which exists in the few short songs usually defined as 'elegies,' to the native English lyrical style, is its roots in human experience. Old English lyric, unlike its medieval successors, does not evade the realities of the singer's existence in order to substantiate a spiritual or psychic ideal, an aim which is enforced in the later culture by the characteristically medieval interpretation of Christianity.

The lyrical style which emerges from the grappling with experience is one which allows the singer to develop his personal self, that subjective condition characteristic of the lyric, by numerous other conditions opposed to that self. These conditions might be summarised as those which are communal, in which the singer shares his self or "I," with others; and as those which are existential, in which he faces those conditions of life which threaten that self with extinction, these being primarily, mortality and procreative love, both of which accentuate the transience of his personal experience. From such an open testing of

reality the Old English lyrical singer's personal self discovers a more confident and human form than can that of his medieval counterpart.

The distinction between these two songs is indicated most clearly in seasonal imagery, in the overwhelming use of winter in Old English song and in the equally overwhelming and abrupt change to spring in medieval song. Winter indicates the Old English singer's struggle with experience and his own humanity, while spring expresses the ideal, which dominates the medieval search for civilisation through a spiritual stability, a stability which defeats the threats of the experience with which the Old English singer is confronted.

Medieval culture is not, however, without its valuable contribution to English lyrical song in that the ideal it expresses is one aspect of the whole medieval quest for a civilisation. The primary objective of this civilising ideal is a sense of form. This form creates a language and structure for lyrical song which shapes the often inarticulate Old English song into a fully accomplished lyric. However, this accomplishment, owing to the deeper spiritual motives behind its assertion, has obliterated the earlier material of lyric, human experience, and then overwhelms with form a native style which was already seeking its own characteristic utterance.

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INTRODUCTION

My intention is to discuss the connection between Old and Middle English, two literatures which are usually defined in isolation. I do not intend to make this connection through a study of the survival of the Old English style into Middle English, nor, conversely, by projecting backwards the medieval style. If there is a connection between these two styles, it is more complex than either of these methods would suggest. For both evade the basic problem of relating the two literatures in that they ignore the fact that a cultural break has occurred. In the very simplicity of the division of Old and Middle English into two independent literatures lies the complexity of their fusion.

For I would claim that these are not in fact two self-contained literatures but rather that they are developments in the growth of English literature as a whole. As a part of such a growth, the break between Old and Middle English is then no longer important as the initiation of a "new" language and literature. Instead it raises the issue of how Old English language, style and content were re-shaped into Middle English. The diverse and often unarticulated problems that arise from such an approach obviously cannot be explained by a preliminary discussion such as this thesis. My hope, however, is that by concentrating upon the break between these 'two literatures' some of the facts of their relationship may become apparent and that these may suggest the means by which fusion was effected.

The method I will use to conduct this study is to define as clearly as possible the two cultures which face each other across the gulf. This gulf I accept as that which occurs historically with the advent of the Normans in the invasion of 1066, superficially a clear and decisive date. It is a date which is often rejected, however, for Norman influence precedes the invasion by some time and is not fully established until years afterwards. It seems safe, therefore, to define this gulf more comprehensively as occurring between 1000 and 1200, a period which coincides with a semi-silence in English literature which would seem to confirm the break between the two cultures.

Interestingly however, the approximate date of the Norman invasion, 1100, is also offered by Ker in The Dark Ages as the watershed between the heroic and the Christian style:

The Northern world before 1100 was still in great part the world of Germania. . . ; after 1100 Germania is harmonised in the new conception of Christendom.

I would consider the change Ker defines here as particularly significant to the study of English literature during the period covered by this thesis for it indicates the alteration from the heroic style of the Anglo-Saxon Germania to the Christian European style which influences Middle English.

I have not investigated all the literature involved in these two cultures but have confined myself to the lyric. This form is of interest because it particularly accentuates the break Ker defines on a continental scale, since the European lyric "begins" with the early 1100's

in Guillaume de Poitiers' songs. Here is the "beginning" of the continental medieval style, of which style the lyric is one of the most characteristic forms. Yet to accept the initiation of lyric in 1100 is also to accept the break between Old and Middle English literature as decisive, for the Middle English lyric only emerges in the thirteenth century, that is, after the development of the Provençal lyrical style. Such a new beginning also creates a clear distinction between Old and Middle English, making the latter a lyrical, the former a non-lyrical, literature. The break seen as an "initiation" denies a lyric to Old English. Such an attitude is confirmed by most criticism.

Yet the undeniable break between the two literatures is perhaps deceptive when interpreted so absolutely. It may be, instead, the uneasy period of adjustment between two styles, with the medieval lyric defined as that lyrical style which emerged on the modern side of the break. It is then possible to ask whether the critical difficulty has only been to locate a medieval lyrical style in Old English literature. When the lyric no longer 'starts' in Middle English, it becomes apparent that a style definably lyrical, although not like the medieval lyric, does exist in the short song of Old English commonly called the elegy.

It seems to me, however, that the lyrical nature of the Old English elegy can only be perceived by distinguishing this song from its medieval counterpart, allowing to both their characteristic qualities. Again the break between the two cultures must be fully affirmed before the independent existence of the two lyrics can be acknowledged. The differences between these lyrics must first be understood before any relationship between them can be detected. I have

therefore basically organised this thesis as a study of two differing kinds of lyrical statement.

The replacement of the Old English lyric by the Middle English was required by certain differences in the two cultures. England, prior to the Middle Ages, was shaped by a Germanic-Celtic population and its style. Since I am concerned with the Anglo-Saxon lyric, it is to the Germanic aspects of this style that I direct the first half of this study in which Old English culture is discussed. Despite emphatic Christian overtones the distinctiveness of this culture arises from its heroic and Germanic ethic. Middle English culture, on the other hand, is the product of a more thoroughly Christianised civilisation and one in which Christianity was becoming progressively more institutional. In addition, the roots of this civilisation were in the Old Roman state, ethic and language, although the Middle Ages had reinterpreted this classical ideal. This medieval version of the classical culture I would call Romance. That is, I would characterise medieval Europe as a Christian Romance civilisation.

This civilisation enters England with the Norman invaders who make inevitable a connection with the 'new' Continental style. The administrative and linguistic changes that occur under the Normans and their Angevin successors were examples, in a condensed and decisive form, of a change that was taking place throughout Western Europe, a change that was setting the pace for circumstances in England. It was this change that required the developments of Middle English culture, those developments which replace the Old English style. The break,

therefore, indicates the replacement of one culture by another. This replacement was effective and, it may be, purposeful, for it is possible that the later style was conscious of the literary substitution it was bringing about and pursued it as a necessity.

These changes can be perceived concisely in the change from the Old to the Middle English lyric. The distinction between these two lyrics is shown most clearly in their attitudes to man and his relation to the universe. Medieval lyric perceives man as dependent upon a spiritual ideal, an ideal which influences the forms of secular life. Middle English lyric interprets the Old English style as threatening its spiritual purpose, for the Old English lyric was rooted in experience rather than the ideal. The source of the change from Old to Middle English lyric therefore lies in the emergence of a spiritual ideal as an inclusive definition of man's relation to life and to the universe around him.

I have discussed this change in the lyric mainly as an alteration in attitudes to time and place, a theme approached through seasonal imagery. The primary seasonal image of Old English is winter; that of Middle English, spring. As an image of time, the Old English winter refers to mortality, and of place, to this world. The Middle English spring, on the other hand, is continually associated with the theme of immortality, and this medieval season is often interchangeable with Heaven.

These seasonal images also define the approach of the two cultures to experience. The Old English lyric poet relies on human experience,

whether it be of himself, of his society, or of the natural world.
Although this lyric also recognises a non-human and impersonal existence
beyond man's experience, it nevertheless accepts life as an empirical
reality. Life so defined presents the singer with the conditions of
love, transience and mortality as known in his actual existence.

The spiritual ideal of the Middle Ages was in open conflict with
mortality and replaced it with the divine conditions of eternity and
heaven. Such conditions presume a permanence to existence, although
it is a permanence located in the non-human and impersonal region
which Old English culture recognises but does not rely upon. The
medieval ideal of permanent existence, of immortality, is, however,
in conflict with man's actual experience and gradually requires the
negation of that experience for the sake of the spiritual existence
sought for the new civilisation. It is for this reason, it seems to me,
that the medieval lyric so decisively replaces the Old English. There
is a latent awareness that the literary forms and content of the preceding
culture threaten the new ideal with an empirical reality fundamentally
opposed to them. There is sufficient material in the developing Middle
English lyric to suggest that this is an open struggle.

It is not only in the spiritual realm that there is opposition.
The institutional and formal objectives of the Christian Romance culture,
derived from the spiritual concepts, were also in opposition to the
preceding ethic. For this ethic was more exclusively secular and had,
in England, been defined in an epic, _Beowulf_. This poem had formulated
the communal aims and values of its age and had measured these by man's

actual experience of his existence. The secular aims of the later

civilisation were defined by spiritual concepts. Its communal objectives

were, as a result, not only less secular but also less vulnerable to

experience. Thus it will be necessary to discuss the principles of

both the heroic and the medieval societies in order to understand why,

in England, the break between the two in literature was so emphatic.

For it was the social and spiritual change that precipitated the change

in literature. It is this change which is reflected in the break, or

semi-silence, of English literature between 1000 and 1200. When the

'new' lyric emerges in the thirteenth century, it is a lyric which has

to a considerable extent adapted itself to the spiritual ideal, and

also to the culture and social patterns this ideal has shaped.

The altered purpose of medieval culture also influences the

singer of the lyric. In both Old and Middle English this singer is

basically in search of a personal image, the "I" which distinguishes

lyric from the didactic or epic, or in Middle English, the romance

style. In Old English the "I" the singer expresses is vitally defined

by his personal awareness of the contrast between communal and individual,

private and public, conditions. As a result, his "I" is derived

primarily from experience. In Middle English the personal image, the

"I," is not made distinct by, but is confounded in, the spiritual and

secular. It is fatally dependent upon the ideal which shapes both the

public and the private world. On the whole the effect of this is to

alter the lyric from a happy balance between the inner and outer

experience of the lyrical "I" to an almost obsessively internalized

personal existence to which empirical, emotional and physical correlatives in the outer world have been denied.

It is within the context of this significant alteration in style and content that I propose an underlying continuance of the English lyrical tradition. For the English lyrical song that emerges in the thirteenth century, while it wrestles with the new style, still contains within it the old. This confusion I perceive in a number of aspects that are not apparent until the differences between the two lyrics are clearly defined. When this has been done, however, it is possible to see an overt struggle between Old and Middle English concepts in issues such as that of the season and of the image of woman. It is also possible to detect a continual counterpoint in English lyrical expression in the early Middle Ages, between the Old English empirical approach to the human condition and the medieval spiritual ideal.

Obviously the problem of language and rhythm is also relevant to the literary fusion but this is an issue too extensive to do more than touch upon. The question of form, however, I have found more closely related to the thematic approach I have adopted. For it seems possible that a dramatic style is inherent in the Old English lyrical approach to experience. This dramatic mode offers the most fertile opportunity for continuance of the Old English lyrical style in the Middle Ages. I have therefore suggested this dramatic mode as a possible means by which some fusion between the two lyrical styles is anticipated, and as precipitating the mature mating of the two lyrics in subsequent English literature.

The aim of this thesis therefore is to recover Old English literature as a contributing part of the English literary tradition. I have chosen to do this by studying the period which divorces Old English from subsequent English literature. This study I have pursued by exploring the history and nature of the lyric. This choice of the lyric is justified not only by the provocative issues that arise from it but also in the quality of Old English lyric itself. While this is an unexpected reversal of values it is one which seems to me to point to the necessity of recovering Old English as a source of much that can later be perceived in English literature.

The Old English lyric is derived from the culture in which it exists and is an obviously assured attempt to seek lyrical expression within the context of that culture. This contrasts with the Middle English lyric which is, as is often noted, an incompetent imitation of Continental masters. I would therefore consider the Old English elegy to be the "native" English lyrical style. This style relies upon a balance between the internal and external in which neither are negated, but are instead held in unresolved tension. This is a tension which most nearly parallels man's experience of his mortal existence. It is from this experience that the Old English lyrical "I" is derived. The expression of this "I" is more "realistic," passionate and dramatic than is the expression of its medieval successor. Yet this later lyric does contribute invaluable advances in form and language, as well as in adding the spiritual ideal to the English lyric attitude. It develops a sophistication of thought and form that the English lyric had not known before.

Both the Old and the Middle English lyric influence later English lyrics in that all these characteristics recur continually in subsequent periods. It is therefore essential to understand both lyrical modes before any full comprehension of the later English lyric can be achieved. It is even more important to understand how they were fused into a composite style, such as can be detected in the Elizabethan period where the modern English lyrical tradition probably really begins. Such an integration can only be appreciated when the founding of the tradition which matured it is explored. That is, the effecting of the fusion between Old and Middle English styles is the real source of the English lyrical tradition. The suggestions made in the conclusion as to the means of achieving this fusion are no more than tentative, but, for the reasons suggested above, I hope they will be challenged and pursued.

CHAPTER I

EPIC TO ELEGY

When one compares the Old English vernacular lyric tradition
with medieval lyrical structures, it is useful to set these lyrics in
their separate backgrounds, that of _Germania_ and that of "_Germania_
harmonised into the new conception of Christendom."[1] It will be
necessary, therefore, to discover what _Germania_ is in literary form;
that is, to study the epic and the heroic society it expresses; and
then to investigate the lyrical song produced by this environment,
the Old English elegiac song, particularly "The Wanderer," "The
Seafarer," "The Wife's Lament" and "Wulf and Eadwacer," in which, I
believe, the Old English lyric is to be found.

My concern, in this section of this thesis, is not so much to
detect in this society those aspects of the "Christian conception"
which had already penetrated the heroic remnants in Old English, but
rather to make clear what those heroic remnants were. For, despite
the formidable research on Old English culture which has brought to
light its Christian colouring and orientation, the idiosyncracy of
that culture is the Germanic tradition still shaping it. Therefore,
in an Old English context, Christianity is, as it were, harmonised
into the conception of _Germania_ rather than the other way around. It
is, therefore, with an 'heroic society' that this section will be
dealing. Such a society appears in the flesh under the Roman gaze in
Tacitus' _Germania_. It is described most comprehensively in H. M.
Chadwick's _The Heroic Age_ and, with particular relevance to conditions
in England, in the latter's _The Origins of the English Nation_ and in

Dorothy Whitelock's <u>The Beginnings of English Society</u>.[2]

It is, however, this society in literature, which I wish to discuss. Therefore, my primary source will be the description of <u>Germania</u> as it appears in literary form in English culture, that is in <u>Beowulf</u> (with some support from related poems among the elegies or short songs). <u>Beowulf</u> seems to me to be much preoccupied with the society in which heroic action takes place, and to provide a clear and comprehensive description of the aims and nature of this society. This poem is perhaps the most reliable if least academic means of discovering what the heroic tradition meant to this English society, what <u>Germania</u> meant to English culture. For, whatever its origins in a Scandinavian past, it is written down and probably largely composed in England in, it seems, the eighth century.

The literary formulation to which an heroic society gives rise is the epic. This is the form claimed by most authorities for the heroic mode. It is not, indeed, even necessary to claim that the society in which the epic originated is itself still functioning heroically. The actual society need not itself be heroic for it expresses an heroic tradition not a fact. This is a case which I find particularly relevant to English culture and to the relation between epic and elegy. Nevertheless it is the heroic tradition which distinguishes Old English culture from the medieval culture which follows it. It is this tradition which I will seek in the epic formulation of the heroic. The relevance of such a formulation to the Old English version of <u>Germania</u> is obvious in the creation of <u>Beowulf</u> itself.

Since epic is the literary mode proper to the heroic way of life, it will be necessary to make clear my interpretation of epic. To avoid a prolonged, and perhaps fruitless, examination of the concepts of epic I have prefaced my own definition with two provided in The Oxford Dictionary. The primary meaning is: ". . . a poem that celebrates in the form of a continuous narrative the achievements of one or more heroic personages of history or tradition."[3] That is, it is the story of a hero or heroes, therefore heroic. But the hero has passed his name on to a description of a community, an age, a style of life, each of these implying a condition which lends itself to the formation of heroes. As a result, this primary meaning of epic seems to be an inadequate rendering of the whole texture of epic. This the dictionary recognises when admitting a 'transferred sense' to the word: "The typical epics, the Homeric poems, the Nibelungenlied, etc., have often been regarded as embodying a nation's conception of its past history, or of the events in that history which it finds most worthy of remembrance."[4] This is a more comprehensive interpretation of this literary mode. For the epic is primarily a statement of a community about its own nature, its origins, traditions, and principles. Primarily what distinguishes epic from other literary forms is the sense of community inherent in the epic vision. In this interpretation the "heroes" who are used to define 'epic' in the primary meaning act as representatives of that community and its purposes. Such an interpretation can, I believe, be substantiated in Beowulf where the interrelation of epic mode and

functioning society seems to me to be significantly close. Indeed

the social implications of Old English epic seem to be an attempt

to describe Old English society's experience of _Germania_.

In the following discussion I will attempt to establish that

a man in an heroic society is a member of a group, and that it is

from belonging to this group and performing successfully those actions

that the group requires of him, that he gains his sense of respect

and fulfillment. This argument will claim, therefore, that it is

the community that defines the heroic man; and that it even gives

him his knowledge of himself and his sense of being. That is, an

'heroic' man gains his sense of self from the group. Such a sense of

group identity will be relevant to the emergence of a lyrical state-

ment from Old English culture, and to the character of that statement.

Tacitus in the _Germania_ indicates that the heroic group, defined

most simply as a company of fighting men, is a Germanic characteristic.

"They fight in clans"[5] with a leader to organise them:

The chief judges the pretensions of all, and assigns to each man his
proper station. A spirit of emulation prevails among his whole train,
all struggling to be first in favour, while the chief places all his
glory in the number and intrepidity of his companions.[6]

Thus the group acquires a structure, and it is a structure more inclu-

sive than this first quotation would suggest. Although remaining

basically the "companions" these are, Tacitus claims, "united by

consanguinity, a family of warriors;"[7] and the group even contains

the "tenderest pledges": "In the heart of the engagement the soldier

hears the shrieks of his wife and the cries of his children."[8] The

group thereby gains a social as well as a military role. Since the "bond of union"[9] of the fighting men includes the non-fighting members as well, the group becomes a self-reliant community. Its reason for existence remains the battlefield, (with all its "sacred obligation" however). According to Tacitus the "obligation" of the battlefield is very simple: "All are bound to defend their leader . . . and to make even their own actions subservient to his renown,"[10] for "he who survives him survives to live in infamy."[11]

Old English society is a Germanic offshoot and it would, therefore, be expected to subscribe to these values, which can, in fact, be detected in the literature. There is frequent reference to the company of fighting men, as in the chosen warriers of the Geats in their "guðsearo geatolic,"[12] (215) who accompany Beowulf on the "wilsið" (216) arriving at their destination as a unit, with every gesture and detail of dress arguing battle:

> Guðbyrne scan
> heard hondlocen, hringiren scir
> song in searwum, þa hie to sele furðum
> in hyra gryregeatwum gangan cwomon.
> Setton sæmeþe side scyldas,
> rondas regnhearde wið þæs recedes weal;
> bugon þa to bence,- byrnan hringdon,
> guðsearo gumena; garas stodon,
> sæmanna searo samod ætgædere, (321-29).

On this occasion these men are virtually one solidly martial being.

Such men are also organised by a chief. Thus the group referred to above is Beowulf's company. It can be seen even later in "The Battle of Maldon" when Bryhtnoth manages his men, training them for battle:

> in þer Bryhtnoth   onȝan beornas trymian
> rad > rædde,   rincum tæhte
> Hu hi sceoldon standan > þone stede healdan,
> $\qquad$ (18-20)[13]

To the chief they owed the "sacred obligation" of loyalty and

defense:

> We gefrægn ic. > næfre wundlicor. > Æt
> wære hilde. > Sixtig sigebeorna. > Sel gebæran >
> Ne nefre swa noc hwitne
> medo. > Sel forgyldan.
> $\qquad$ (The Finnesburh Fragment, 39-45)[14]

However the projection of the group into action on the

battlefield is not the only focus of the group. It also projects

itself with equal energy when it gathers in feast after the battle.

The first half of "Beowulf" is structured by such action and feast.

Feats of strength are paralleled by banquets and all the rewards,

boasting and merriment these entail. This feasting, in which the

men remain active and ready for battle, seems to complete the martial

company, in that it allows the whole group which has been preserved

to celebrate the heroic action. Hence the carefully recorded social

presence of the queen, circling the company with the cup, a greeting

and offering of thanks. This celebration which completes the group

in action by the group at rest, seems to give social meaning to the

struggle.

But the heroic company does not only encompass action and

feasting. It also provides emotional satisfaction, satisfying

essentially the whole complex of human relationships. The group

includes not only the men of the hall and their lord, but also their

families, both the closest and the more distant members, the "swæsne"
(50)[15] and the "maga" (51)[16]:

> þonne beoð þy hefigran   heortan benne,
> Sare æfter swæsne.   Sorg bið geniwad,
> þonne maga gemynd   mod geondhweorfeð;

It, therefore, offers intimate love, the support of blood, the outgoing

companionship of friends and the admiration for and loyalty to the

leader.

In bewailing the loss of this group the Wanderer claims one

of its gifts to be the sharing of thoughts in speech:

> Nis nu cwicra nan
> þe ic him modsefan   minne durre
> sweotule asecgan.   (9-11)

The result is a man shut within himself in silence, "ferðlocan fæste

binde" (13); advice, "his winedryhtnes/ leofes larcwidum," (37-38)

which will extend his own wisdom; and help, one who "frefran wolde,/

weman mid wynnum," (28-29) so that he need not depend on his own

physical and emotional strength alone: both these have been denied him

with the loss of the group. The man who possesses still these privi-

leges of group life therefore enjoys more than his own resources in

speech, thought and strength, so that he becomes something more

than himself, something nearer approaching a composite of group

members, of family, friends and lord.

"Frynd" is the most comprehensive term for members of the

Germanic group. 'Frynd' can refer not only to those who are equals

and unrelated, but also to the lord who is the "winedryhten," the kin,

as well as to lovers as in "The Wife's Lament."

Frynd sind on eorþan,
leofe lofgende, leger weardiað, (33-34)

All these are friends, which implies that the whole group, both when
united and, also, separately, can be identified by the same word,
a word expressing companionship. This word is opposed by one
equally communal that of "laðra" the enemy and the feuds which
are the communal hatred.

The main "frynd" is, of course, the lord, and, in him, the
group discovers its focus. The Wanderer recalls the ritual of this
fundamental relationship:

on cneo lecge/ honda ond heafod, (42-43)

This is a formal homage which seems to make all the men (and through
them their familes) emotionally as well as physically dependent upon
the lord. This dependence upon him, expressed through personal loyalty
to him, and in songs about his deeds which are also theirs, is a
dependence upon his pivotal position for maintenance of the group
structure. Thus the lord's real role is to represent to its members
the full and healthy functioning of the group. He, therefore, represents
the group itself. He is not only a hero but is a hero with social
value. He alone can give the group its purpose, organisation, and
stability. He alone can make it whole. He therefore becomes to some
extent a group symbol, to be revered and fought for to the death;
while also remaining the closest of friends whom the Wanderer can
"clyppe ond cysse." (42).

The structure given to the group by the lord, and by the
companionship built around him, takes on concrete form in the treasure.

The lord is the "sinces bryttan" (25) and the "sincþegne" (34) the
source of gold. Treasure is a promise that he alone can make real.
In addition, as it can only be given as a reward for action, it
becomes a sign of the man's standing within the group, and,
consequently of his security. Possessed of treasure, or land,
he is able to measure his actions and his value. The practical
minstrel, Widsiþ, speaks openly of the treasures he has received
and implies that they have brought him security:

> se me beag forgeaf, burgwarena fruma,
> on þam siex hund wæs smætes goldes,
> gescyred sceatta scillingrime;
> þone ic Eadgilse on aht sealde,
> minum hleodrytne, þa ic to ham bicwom,
> leofum to leane, þæs þe he me lond forgeaf,
> mines fæder eþel, frea Myrginga. (90-96)

In "Deor" the singer's misery arises from the loss of this treasure,
again the lord's gift, dependent even more clearly on the lord's favour
this time:

> oþ þæt Heorrenda nu,
> leoð-cræftig monn londryht geþah,
> þæt me eorla hleo ær gesealde. (39-41)

More obviously, each heroic act, in stories by the group, is only
defined as such when recognised by the suitable reward of treasure-
giving. For example Hroðgar makes his thanks to Beowulf "unc sceal worn
fela/ maþma gemænra, . . ." (1783-1784). Again the sharing of the
"loot" is a sign of the completion of the fighting, and the excitement
of treasure-giving is the prime means of celebrating the whole group
and its victory. But the treasure primarily stresses the need for a
lord since reward for heroism and sharing of profit are only ensured

when he leads to battle and distributes afterwards.

Yet the lord's value is not only economic but lies also in
his public role, which adapts the warriors into a full social group
which not only fights but also feasts together. This public role
is emphasised by the presence of his wife at the feast giving it
the wedded bond of lord and wife, that is, the full blessing of
society with its future in its families.

The group is most fully realised in the hall, where all but
its military action will usually take place; and at times even this
occurs within the hall as in Beowulf:

> Donne wæs þeos medoheal on morgentid,
> drihtsele dreorfah, . . . (484-85)

and in the "Finnesburh Fragment" "Da wæs on healle/ wæl-slihte gehlyn"
(26-27). The word hall itself is ubiquitous appearing in compounds
with 'meodu,' 'wine,' 'secgas' and 'gold,' but it is the 'chamber for
retainers' that is most expressive. This hall contains the group and
all the group means to the men when they are away from it: mead,
treasure, friends, song. So the Wanderer's memories are of "selesecgas
ond sincþege" (34) and of his "goldwine" who "wenede to wiste" (35-36).
In Beowulf all the familiar daily round grows brighter and gayer with
the pleasures of full assembly:

> Leoð wæs asungen,
> gleomannes gyd. Gamen eft astah,
> beorhtode bencsweg, byrelas sealdon
> win of wondorfatum. (1159-62)

Here is found the noise of men after battle, relaxing, drunken, singing
and boasting, as also in "The Wanderer":

Hwær cwom symbla gesetu? Hwær sindon seledreamas?
Eala beorht bune! Eala byrnwiga! (93-94)

The hall receives the victorious warriors, as in <u>Beowulf</u> where the

"feowertyne/ Geata" "meodowongas træd" (1642-43). It also houses the

defended group, for the hall is the protection, the only home.

Standing, as Heorot does, in an empty, cold, and monster-ridden land

these four walls are in themselves an achievement:

>   Wod under wolcnum to þæs þe he winreced,
>   goldsele gumena gearwost wisse
>   fættum fahne. (715-17)

As a structure it is more than a building: it is a signal of

warmth, security and company, like the group itself, which it

houses. Nor is it built until the group is complete. When Hroðgar

has assembled his company through "heresped" (64) so that "him his

winemagas/ georne hyrdon" (65-66) and "seo geogoð geweox" (66), then

he decides to build a "Medoærn" wherein he can "eall gedælan/ geongum

ond ealdum," (71-2). It is therefore as a kind of fulfilment of the

group life that the hall comes into being; and it becomes a likeness

of the completed society, shining to the land around

>   oþ þæt hy [s]æl timbred
>   geatolic ond goldfah ongyton mihton;
>   þæt wæs foremærost foldbuendum
>   receda under roderum, on þæm se rica bad;
>   lixte se leoma ofer landa fela. (307-11)

This is the glory of all the company dependent upon Hroþgar.

In such a life it is 'the men' who perform; the "magodriht micel"

(67) the "guman" (215) and "weras" (216). This crowd, as one unit,

is evoked constantly in <u>Beowulf</u> in descriptions such as "ymb þa

gifhealle guðrinc monig;/ ferdon folctogan feorran ond nean" (838-9)
or in the fourteen Geats. It can also be seen in the "The Ruin"
where the company evoked to inhabit the shattered town is always the
mass, plural and anonymous--not 'a man' but 'men'. The single man
recedes into "swylce geong manig" (854) or "cyninges þegn" (868);
while 'the men' are clearly present, reacting together to danger,
refreshing themselves together, a solid body, a crowd rather than
individuals. Indeed it is mankind in general that this group
basically represents as is shown most literally in "Widsiþ"

> Mid Froncum ic wæs ond mid Frysum ond mid Frumtingum.
> Mid Rugum ic wæs ond mid Glommum ond mid Rumwalum. (68-69)

The individual as he exists within the structure of the group
is represented by the hero. With the support of group members he
marches out of the company to do lone battle with the enemy. Thus
Beowulf leaves his own group to seek his adventure:

> þæt fram ham gefrægn Higelaces þegn
> god mid Geatum, Grendles dæda;
> se wæs moncynnes mægenes strengest
> on þæm dæge þysses lifes
> æþele ond eacen.   (194-98)

Accompanied by a small band of followers he arrives to claim the
challenge:

> þæt ic mote ana [ond] minra eorla gedryht
> þes hearda heap, Heorot fælsian. (431-32)

In this action the hero represents the kind of personal existence the
man sought within the group. Through his adventures Beowulf is
claiming his own heroic status, a position that had not been his
before and one which can only be awarded by the recognition of the

group. The comment upon Beowulf's triumphal return to this group
demonstrates this position clearly:

> Hean wæs lange,
> swa hyne Geata bearn godne ne tealdon,
> ne hyne on medobence micles wyrðne
> drihten Wedera gedon wolde;
> swyðe (wen)don, þæt he sleac wære,
> æðeling unfrom. Edwenden cwom
> tireadigum menn torna gehwylces.- (2183-89)

In mastering the adventures he has sought, the hero acquires the
full individual manhood the group demands before it will give
respect.

The hero is not, therefore, like the lord, a representative of
the group as a whole, so much as of the individuality of each member
of that group:

> ond nu wið Grendel sceal,
> wið þam aglæcan ana gehegan
> ðing wið þyrse. (424-26),

Beowulf boasts. In this assertion of himself "ana" lies the meaning
of all the personal pronouns, the "I" used so frequently by the hero.
It is he alone who will meet the trial, test his own strength and win
his own glory. He is, therefore, the hero rather than the king, the
individual group member's sense of his own personality rather than
a representative of the whole complex. As a result he has a less
matured responsibility towards the group. However he remains always
a participating member pursuing objectives which serve the group, as
in Beowulf "Heorot fælsian" for the hall is useless to Hroðgar's
group before Beowulf arrives:

> secgað sæliðend, þæt þes sele stande,
> reced selesta rinca gehwylcum

> idel ond unnyt, siðð an fenleoht
> under heofenes hador beholen weorþeð. (411-14)

Yet the hero always remains under the control of the group:

> þa me þæt gelærdon leode mine,
> þa selestan, snotore ceorlas,
> þeoden Hroðgar, þæt ic þe sohte, (415-17)

This latter relationship with the group is probably clearest in the bond between the hero and the king. Beowulf, despite his salutary feats of strength and courage, always defers to Hroðgar and to the group he represents. Even more important, however, is his own group and its lord, Hygelac, for it is to these he must return to claim recognition. So he stresses this greater authority at the beginning of his adventure in such words as: "Onsend Higelace, gif mec hild nime,/ beaduscruda betst" (452-3) and "swa me Higelace sie,/ min mondrihten modes bliðe," (435-36); and he submits automatically, if with pride, to him, when he has completed his trial, offering to Hygelac the rewards of it:

> ac he me (maðma)s geaf,
> sunu Healfdenes on (min)ne sylfes dom;
> ða ic ðe, beorncyning, bringan wylle,
> estum geywan. Gen is eall æt ðe
> lissa gelong; (2146-50)

The task itself is submitted to the lord and, thereby, to the group:

> þær ic, þeoden min, þine leode
> weorð ode weorcum. (2095-96)

Thus singlehanded, the hero challenges the destructive forces around him, thereby asserting his personal existence, to gain recognition for himself and to bring credit to the group, that is, he acts always within a secure communal background which is his true

environment.

However, should the hero lose this support, as Beowulf loses

it when he is lord of his own group, in the second half of the

poem, then his position alters. He is no longer fighting with a

purpose, he no longer represents the whole body of men in his lone

struggle. At this point in Beowulf's career his death intervenes,

but it is apparent that, although he had won, his struggle is of

no avail to the group and may even be destructive of it. From the

beginning of this adventure the king's mind is "geomor," "wæfre ond

wælfus, wyrd ungemete neah" (2420). But more important is the

desertion of the group at the crisis, in contrast to the earlier

companions, during the fight with Grendel's mother:

<pre>
                        Gistas setan
        modes seoce   ond on mere staredon;
        wiston ond ne wendon, þæt hie heora winedrihten
        selfne gesawon.-   (1602-05)
</pre>

In the second adventure the companions flee:

<pre>
        Nealles him on heape   handgesteallan,
        æðelinga bearn   ymbe gestodon
        hildecystum,   ac hy on holt bugon,
        ealdre burgan.   (2596-99)
</pre>

There is also a reflection upon Beowulf's honour as a king, made

sadly by the one man who remains loyal to him, Wiglaf:

<pre>
        Oft sceall eorl monig   anes willan
        wræc adreogan,   swa us geworden is.
        Ne meahton we gelæran,   leofne þeoden,
        rices hyrde   ræd ænigne,
        þæt he ne grette   goldweard þone,
        lete hyne licgean,   þær he longe wæs,
        wicum wunian   oð woruldende.   (3077-83)
</pre>

These two rejections, one physical and the other moral, underlie the increasing loneliness of the king during this second half of the poem. This loneliness is presented in the sombre language, in the reference to past fame rather than to his present actions, and in his sense of exhaustion and approaching doom. Beowulf in this section is most characteristically pictured thus

> Da se æðeling giong,
> þæt he bi wealle wishycgende
> gesæt on sesse; seah on enta geweorc,
> hu ða stanbogan staþulum fæste
> ece eorðreced innan healde.
> (2715-19)

Only Wiglaf stays with him and helps him to recapture some heroic stature, but, without his full group and its support, the saddened king is the man alone.

To be alone is therefore alien to the heroic group. A spasmodic loneliness while basically enjoying the company of other members of the group is possible as it is for the hero who, as vanguard and embodiment of the group action, is often solitary. But a true loneliness which separates from kin and companions and lord is unheroic. In such circumstances there is no true objective to the man's life, as such an objective can be provided by communal values, and there is no communion either emotionally or morally. This is one cause of the Wanderer's grief. None of the group life is available to him to bring advice, security or human contact. In all similar cases whether the group has been emotionally distanced by some personal crisis, or has been destroyed, the effect is the

same. The group member is alone and as a result of his loneliness approaches what is identifiable as the elegiac rather than the epic mood.

The elegiac condition and responses can be demonstrated most simply, paradoxically, from the epic. The unusually elegiac tone of Beowulf has been noted by a number of critics.[17] One Scandinavian critic Axel Olrik[18] identifies the hero particularly, contrasting him with his Scandinavian forbears, and in doing so isolates a character which is markedly elegiac:

The old hero, nameless and not much individualized, with his complaint for vanished glories, is typical for English poetry, and does not remind one of the characters of Scandinavian poetry.[19]

This is the character discovered in the hero Beowulf in the second half of the poem:

> se þone gomelan gretan sceolde,
> secean sawle hord, sundur gedælan
> lif wið lice;   (2421-23)

and this section is much preoccupied with his past. This old hero with "his complaint for vanished glories" is essentially the Old English elegiac figure.

In Beowulf he is seen in three significant passages. The first is that which tells of the hoarded gold and its keeper who alone survives a splendid company of men. His memories of these men set them among the lost festivities of the hall:

> Næs hearpan wyn,
> gomen gleobeames, ne god hafoc
> geond sæl swingeð, ne se swifta mearh
> burhstede beateð.   (2262-65)

The recurring negatives stress the loss of this magnificent world.
Only emptiness is left, a world without men, company and pleasure.
The long cry of the last survivor for his dead companions is, as
will appear, a conventional Germanic elegiac lament for men who are
gone:

> Nah, hwa sweord wege
> oððe fe (o)r(mie) fæted wæge,
> dryncfæt deore; dug-(uð) ellor s[c]eoc.
> Sceal se hearda helm (hyr)stedgolde,
> fætum befeallan; heormynd swefað,
> þaðe beadogriman bywan sceoldon;
> ge swylce seo herepad, sio æt hilde gebad
> ofer borda gebræc bite irena,
> brosnað æfter beorne. Ne mæg byrnan hring
> æfter wigfruman wide feran,
> hæleðum be healfe.   (2252-62)

This mood of loss is most imaginatively embodied in the second
passage from Beowulf in the grief of an old man for his son hung
upon the gallows. No action is permitted him since his son was
criminal and crime deprives the kind of vengeance and compensation.
Therefore he is allowed only his sorrow. The loss in this passage is
not so much a physical one, a loss of man, treasure and a glad life,
as emotional. It is the actual emptiness of the man's surroundings
which shapes the emotional emptiness which encloses him:

> Gesyhð sorhcearig on his suna bure
> winsele westne, windge reste
> reote berofene,- ridend swefað,
> hæleð in hoðman; nis þær hearpan sweg,
> gomen in geardum, swylce ðær iu wæron.
> XXVGewiteð þonne on sealman, sorhleoð gæleð
> an æfter anum; þuhte him eall to rum,
> wongas ond wicstede.   (2455-62)

Silence, loneliness, memories and the painful space around the
solitary man, these characterise the elegiac sense of loss.

In the epic, death is the usual destroyer that has brought pride and gold and man to nothing, and death is usually, therefore, the source of the speaker's grief. Thus the last survivor claims:

> guðdeað fornam,
> feorhbealo frecne   fyra gehwylcne
> leoda minra   þara þe þis [lif] ofgeaf,   (2249-51)

and "Bealocwealm hafað/ fela feorhcynna   forð onsended!'" (2265-66).

So also in the old man's passage his son hangs "hrefne to hroðre" (2448) which has occurred

> þonne se an hafað
> þurh deaðes nyd   dæda gefondad.   (2453-54)

In this passage also "ridend swefað/ hæleð in hoðman" (2457-8) for it is the grave alone which remains, the earth which holds the heroes.

Finally in <u>Beowulf</u> there is the death of Beowulf himself. This is an account of the death of the lord, who, as the centre of the group, represents its whole life. In that he is not a single man but rather the expression of a whole society he can hardly die a private death. If he passes without leaving an effective successor the group is unable to function and disintegrates. Such a death only too often means more than the loss of the lord, crisis enough as this is for each group member. It means also loss of the group itself. The death of Beowulf amply illustrates this theme. In the very appointment of Wiglaf as his successor, "fremmað gena/ leoda þearfe" (2800-2801), there is a reference to fate which suggests the ending of a dynasty and the consequent futility of choosing another leader for this group.

> 'þu eart endelaf usses cynnes,
> Wægmundinga; ealle wyrd forsweoþ
> mine magas to metodsceafte,
> eorlas on elne; ic him æfter sceal. (2813-16)

This feeling is confirmed at the funeral pyre when, superimposed

upon the formal funeral lament--the wailing amid the wind and the

flames--there is foreboding about the future. Even the old woman

singing the "(song) sorgcearig" (3152) fears for herself "(hearmda)gas

hearde" (3153) and "wælfylla worn, (wigen)des egesan" (3154).

Wiglaf expresses this future of 'evil days' more clearly and more

hopelessly. His foreboding arises directly out of his lord's death

and out of the desertion of Beowulf at that time by the companions.

Wiglaf sees this as a falling away from group principles:

> Wergendra to lyt
> þrong ymbe þeoden, þa hyne sio þrag becwom.
> (2882-83)

The words which follow condemn the group to exile with a solemn but

despairing justice--a justice dependent for the most part upon the

harsh facts of lordlessness:

> Nu sceal sincþego ond swyrdgifu,
> eall eðelwyn eowyrum cynne,
> lufen alicgean; londrihtes mot
> þære mægburge monna æghwylc
> idel hweorfan, syððan æðelingas
> feorran gefricgean fleam eowerne,
> domleasan dæd. (2884-90)

Yet this again is not only physical but emotional for the mood of

the grieving old father is to descend upon the wandering group as

the messenger warns them. They must roam now with too much space

and no place to belong, possessing only memories of "hleahtor,"

"gamen and gleodream" which have all been lost, laid aside ("alegde")

with the "herewisa" as he has laid them aside. Cold, lonely, empty-

handed and dispossessed, they will be in the land of exile:

> nalles eorl wegan
> maððum to gemyndum, ne mægð scyne
> habban on healse hringweorðunge,
> ac sceal geomormod, golde bereafod
> oft nalles æne elland tredan,
> nu se herewisa hleahtor alegde,
> gamen ond gleodream. Forð on sceall gar wesan
> monig morgenceald mundum bewunden,
> hafen on handa, nalles hearpan sweg
> wigend weccean, ac se wonna hrefn
> fus ofer fægum   (3015-25)

The first passage from <u>Beowulf</u> on the hoarded gold and its

keeper is recognisably similar to the short elegiac poem "The Ruin."

Here also the glories of the hall are recalled:

> heresweg micel,
> meodoheall monig dreama full, (22-23)

and the warrior:

> þær iu beorn monig
> glædmod ond goldbeorht gleom gefrætwed,
> wlonc ond wingal wighyrstum scan; (32-34)

and the treasure:

> seah on sinc, on sylfor, on searogimmas,
> on ead, on æht, on eorcanstan,
> on þas beorhtan burg bradan rices (35-37)

The picture of present decay in "The Ruin" like the negatives in the

<u>Beowulf</u> passage stresses the loss of the glad life:

> Wrætlic is þes wealstan, wyrde gebræcon;
> burgstede burston, brosnað enta geweorc.
> Hrofas sind gehrorene, hreorge torras,
> hrungeat berofen, hrim on lime,
> scearde scurbeorge scorene, gedrorene,
> ældo undereotone.   (1-6)

The poet also laments the men of the past, who will never build

again, in much the same way that the last survivor mourns his

companions:

> wurdon hyra wigsteal westen staþolas,
> brosnade burgsteall. Betend crungon
> hergas to hrusan.   (27-29)

This ruined setting occurs in another of the elegies, "The

Wanderer:"

> Winde biwaune weallas stondaþ,
> hrime bihrorene, hryðge þa ederas.
> Woriað þa winsalo, waldend licgað
> dreame bidrorene, duguð eal gecrong,
> wlonc bi wealle.   (76-80)

and in this poem the picture of "eald enta geweorc idlu stodon"

culminates in the most passionate lament for the lost halls and their

occupants of all these passages:

> Hwær cwom mearg? Hwær cwom mago? Hwær cwom maþþumgyfa?
> Hwær cwom symbla gesetu? Hwær sindon seledreamas?
> Eala beorht bune! Eala byrnwiga!
> Eala þeodnes þrym!   (92-95)

There is one other characteristic of the elegy, however, and

this is death, which is the accepted source of elegiac grief. The

epic and the elegy react differently to death. An heroic death is

met with ease. It is not an occasion for fear as can be seen as

Beowulf sets off into the lake, that he may die for "nalles for ealdre

mearn" (1443). Such a death frees man from the pattern of time by

its very recognition of the necessities of that pattern:

> No þæt yðe byð
> to befleonne -fremme se þe wille -,
> ac gesecan sceal sawlberendra
> nyde genydde, niþða bearna,

             grundbuendra   gearwe stowe,
             þær his lichoma   legerbedde fæst
             swefe æfter symle.   (1002-8)

But to the elegiac mood this acceptance is impossible and the very

necessity of death becomes an obsession driving towards grief and

mourning that it must happen.   Thus even Beowulf himself, at his

elegiac end, suffers from a mild form of such a mood:

             Ne wæs þæt eðe sið,
         þæt se mæra   maga Ecgðeowes
         grundwong þone · ofgyfan wolde;
         sceolde [ofer] willan   wic eardian
         elles hwergen,   swa sceal æghwylc mon
         alætan lændagas.   (2586-91)

     In the elegies, therefore, death becomes the most significant

means of breaking the bond between men and of precipitating, thereby,

the grief and reflection of the elegiac mood:

         oþþæt þæt onwende   wyrd seo swiþe.
         Crungon walo wide,   cwoman woldagas,
         swylt eall fornom   secgrofa wera; (Ruin 24-26)

And again the earth receives what has gone:

                 Eorðgrap hafað
         waldend wyrhtan   forweorone, geleorene,
         heardgripe hrusan,   oþ hund cnea
         werðeoda gewitan.   (Ruin 6-9)

     The themes of loss and loneliness again arise from the theme

of death.   This loss and loneliness are basic to all the elegies

whatever the overt subject.   The most likely source of this elegiac

mood is, as I have attempted to prove, the situation presented in

the last passage in Beowulf, the loss of the group as a result of

the lord's death.   This situation occurs again in "The Wanderer" in

a statement unreservedly elegiac, where the conventional formulæ.

come most fully alive. All the nostalgia of the Wanderer's mood

arises from a recognition parallel to that of Wiglaf and the

messenger, of the lord's death and its significance. In the elegy

this recognition is of importance to the speaker's own life,

whereas in Beowulf the recognition was important to the group. And

in the elegy this theme of dispossession is focussed more simply than

in the epic in the one phrase which follows the acceptance of the

lord's death--"ond ic hean þonan." The finality of the monosyllables

and the linking through juxtaposition with the lord's death, imply a

necessity to the movement away: "hrusan heolster biwrah ond ic hean

þonan" (23). These words are as much a description of his state of

mind as of his physical position, for the death of the lord, depriving

him of the group, has left an emptiness, an absence of company, which is

summed up in his enforced departure. He can now only describe him-

self as "þonan" 'thence,' 'away from' his former environment and

all it meant to him. He is now not only dispossessed but exiled.

This phrase, therefore, both physically and emotionally describes

him as the Wanderer. This exile is the final effect of the loss of

the group and it is this which makes the truly elegiac figure, exiled

from land, society, companionship, love and joy.

CHAPTER II

THE EXILE

Exile, in the empty world of the old father and of Beowulf's
group, is a recurrent condition in Old English poetry and has been
established as one aspect of the formulaic poetry of the Anglo-
Saxons. S. B. Greenfield has categorised the exile-formulæ in Old
English in a careful and factual study[1] which isolates exile figures
from poems as widely different as _Genesis_ and "The Wife's Lament"[2]
showing that they all use a common language "all of these are in
part at least formulaically accoutered." He divides these formulæ
into "four aspects, or concomitants, of exile state:"[3]

1. status (e.g., wineleas wrecca, . . .)
2. deprivation (e.g., lande bereafod, . . .)
3. state of mind (e.g., hean and earm, . . .)
4. movement in or to exile (e.g., wunode wræc-lastum, . . .)[3]

Although this article primarily demonstrates the diversity of this
exile image it is noticeable that either "The Wanderer," or "The
Seafarer" or "The Wife's Lament" figures under each of these headings.
They contain words for _status_ such as "wineleas wrecca" (WL, 10),
"anhaga" (WAN, 1), "earm" (WAN, 40); _deprivation_ as in "eðle bidæled"
(WAN, 20), or "winemægum bidroren" (SEA, 16); _state of mind_ the use
of "earm," "geomor" and compounds of "cearig" occur in WAN 2b, 20a,
24a, 40a; and _movement in or to exile_ in "wræccan laste" (SEA, 15)
and "wadan wræc-lastas" (WAN, 5). Greenfield, in fact, talks of these
three poems[4] as those "in which exile imagery plays such a large role"
and sees in their development of this convention "a large measure of
their poetic individuality."[5, 6]

These formulæ of exile are used throughout the elegies. It
is a condition basically the same as that which is anticipated for
the group in Beowulf. The "wræclastas" (WAN, l.5a) is without
people, "winemægum bidroren" (SEA, 1.16) "wineleasne guma," "freond-
leasne" (WAN, 1.28). The reaction to this loneliness is that
"earmcearig" (SEA, 1.16) and "earfeþa" (WAN, 1.6) mood so charac-
teristic of these songs. The memories of friends, of the warmth
and security of the former society, and the hard, and probably futile,
task of finding a new lord at the end of the journey, are the circum-
stances defining these dispossessed men. The difference in the
elegies lies in the focus. This focus shifts from a peripheral
awareness of the image as an illustration of a potential state of
mind in other poems, to the centre of the experience in the elegies.
There the exiles themselves are the 'dramatis personæ' and the plot
is adjustment to this new experience which has become now the whole
of existence. It seems to me necessary to the definition of the
elegy, therefore, to see these poems as a treatment of the exile and
an attempt to communicate the exile's experience.

The circumstances parting the singer from his former existence
may vary from the economic to the emotional. It may have occurred
as in the 'love' poems, "Wulf and Eadwacer" and "The Wife's Lament,"
through an emotional crisis with a person, or as in "Widsiþ" and
"Deor" through occupational insecurities (the wandering minstrel and
his dependence upon patronage). It may be, as in "The Seafarer,"
a deliberate physical rupture, or, as in "The Ruin," through

historical distance. It is only in "The Wanderer" that the more
revealing loss of lord and companions leading logically to dis-
possession, that is to exile, occurs without elaboration. However,
in each case some kind of separation or parting does occur and in
each case the secondary 'actor' from whom the singer is separated,
is associated with the group, if it is not the group itself. The
result of this separation is always the loneliness of the exiled
figure. It is this loneliness, of whatever the kind, which causes
the mood of the elegies, a mood of lament, and therefore essentially
an unhappy mood, (although I would wish to qualify this later)
since the love, companions, events, and buildings which are examined
in these poems are defined as being no longer part of the exile's
life. All belong to a way of life which existed prior to the
composing of the poem, a way of life depending essentially upon a
communal existence. This examination of what no longer exists gives
rise to the mood basic to the elegy, the sense of loss. B. J. Timmer
described it thus:

The chief motif of the elegiac Old English poems is a lament over
lost happiness, i.e. either the loss of happy circumstances of
life, or of the passing of youth . . . , [or of] the transitoriness
of life on earth. . .[7]

Timmer carefully defines the elegiac mood as it appears in
"The Wife's Lament," "Wulf and Eadwacer," "The Wanderer" and "The
Seafarer," stating about the first of these that

. . . we find the elements that may be taken as characteristic elegiac
elements: lament over misery, separation from the lord and banish-
ment, change of luck, comparison with former happiness (here implied
by references to friends that live happily just as she might have
lived, 11-33ff.) and a longing for love are expressed in a lamenting
tone.[8]

He claims further that:

The first part of the Wanderer is undoubtedly elegiac. The
Wanderer is an exile, who complains about the loss of his lord
and his subsequent hardships. He also compares his former
happiness with his present misfortunes (11.1-57). From these
elegiac reflections on his personal experience the speaker passes
on to observations of a more general nature about the transience
of life and the insignificance of time. . . .[9]

"The Seafarer" is "of a similar nature," although "far less typically
elegiac."[10]

Timmer's purpose in this discussion is to offer an explanation
of the fact that the elegiac character is so prominent a trait of
Old English poetry. He does so by discussing the adaptation of the
elegiac mood to Christian purposes. It is a study mainly concerned,
therefore, with apportioning pagan and Christian influence and
material, but his identification of loss and separation as fundamental
to all the elegies is of great value to the discussion of the lyrical
nature of these songs.[11] This separation and sense of loss is a
structural principle which is, at least, common to all the Old English
elegies. It also draws together the themes of exile and transitoriness,
and the lamenting tone. These are recurrent aspects of these three
elegiac poems, which might then be defined as responses to that
loneliness which is produced by parting from something of value.

The unhappiness supposedly inherent in the Old English elegy
is less easily validated. The normal reaction to parting or loss is
grief. Hence the poems dealing with these topics might be expected
to, and usually do, express misery. It is for this reason, it seems

to me, that they have been called elegies. Yet the elegy, according

to the definition used by Timmer, is

a short poem of lamentation or regret, called forth by the decease
of a beloved or revered person, or by a general sense of the pathos
of mortality   (Encyclopaedia Brit.)[12]

But this is less easily applied to these songs than might at first

appear. There is a death in only one of these poems which would

argue that there is no compelling need for a death in order to produce

the elegiac mood. Nor is the dominant emotion in the elegy always

grief. Poems like "Widsiþ" and "Deor" are fairly matter of fact;

"The Ruin" while it offers regret, has none of that personal involve-

ment required for grief; in poems like "Wulf and Eadwacer" and "The

Wife's Lament" there is too much demanding passion for true lament

and in "The Seafarer" the mood is often elation rather than grief.

With such a variety of emotional possibilities it seems wiser

to return to the actual condition of the singer in the elegies. He

is most simply defined as alone and "exiled," in the sense established

so far, and parted from a previous existence, fundamentally communal

in nature, or, at least, shared. Whatever the occasion of parting,

the singer in each spends much of his time remembering that which is

lost, usually people, although it can be halls, towns or land. And

these lost ones are still participating in the action of the poem,

even if only as memories, even though only by their absence, which

absence, to the elegiac mood, becomes a most positive presence.

The real source of these poems, seems to me to be the defini-

tion of the man separated from the heroic Germanic group who is,

therefore, alone. This loneliness is defined by comparing the two

conditions, the past and the present, the lonely man and his

companioned life. Thus each moment of grief (if grief it is) is

grief for isolation and is given its existence largely by reference

to a shared joy.

The separation of man and group seems to require two basic

images and I find both essentially related to the lyrical nature of

this elegiac expression.

The first is time, which is used as a definition of experience

both individual and communal. The Wanderer's memories are of men

who seem too substantial for the world of the mind as they haul their

way through mental seas:

> þonne maga gemynd mod geondhweorfeð;
> greteð gliwstafum, georne geonsdceawað
> secga geseldan. Swimmað eft on weg! (51-53)[13]

They seem almost embodied, a memory in real seas and yet with such

mental weight that they almost make the real seas themselves a

thing of the mind. His distress here arises not only from the loss

of erstwhile companionship but also from the conflict in time between

past and present. It is from this latter conflict that the urgency

of the "Hwær cwom" questions arises. In this passage the Wanderer

is trying to make the lost world into reality again, for they once

came thus:

> Hwær cwom mearз? hwær cwom maзo? hwær cwom maþþumgyfa?
> Hwær cwom symbla gesetu? Hwær sindon seledreamas?
> Eala beorht bune! Eala byrnwiga!
> Eala þeodnes þrym! (92-95)

In this ephemeral assertion of the past he hopes to validate his
present. Yet he fails:

> Hu seo þrag gewat,
> genap under nihthelm,   swa heo no wære. (95-96)

The friends have gone, so his words finally rise to the bleak lament:

> Her bið feoh læne,   her bið freond læne,
> her bið mon læne,   her bið mæg læne, (108-109)

Yet in this clear recognition of one aspect of life lies an equally
clear recognition of another. He knows they did exist, that they
were as well as "were not." The tension between these two is
emphasised in the "swa (as if) heo no wære" (96).

The reiterated questions rising to a crescendo through rhythm
and variation of alliteration, make the images of this passage vivid
and spontaneous. The intensity of the words suggests that this is
a crisis and that the statement is central to the theme of this poem,
and perhaps to other passages dealing with the same theme. The words
that complete this sequence: "Hu seo þrag gewat,/ genap under
nihthelm, swa heo no wære" (96) have a conclusive simplicity that
suggests they are a comment on the foregoing lament, much as the
last couplet in a sonnet would be. They sum it up not only verbally
as the intensity lapses into resignation, but also in meaning, as
the singer recognises his loss as measured by time and physical
absence. These lines embody, most simply, the emptiness surrounding
the old father grieving for his lost son, an emptiness reminding him
so much more clearly of the life that once was, by its loneliness.
Nor is it the mood of these two lines alone that appears in other

elegiac passages. The words themselves are repeated in almost the same form in "The Wife's Lament" as "swa hit no ware" and again they refer to emotional loss. This brief phrase "swa heo/hit no ware" (WAN, 96; WL, 24), therefore seems to be an attempt to interpret the memories and loneliness which have characterised the elegiac mood so far.

This effort may be related to the recurrent theme of death in the elegy. Again the simple brevity of a phrase from "The Wanderer" "hrusan heolster biwrah" seems to sum up most concisely the absolute and annihilating necessity of death, represented in the dark grasp of the earth. This theme, which Ker calls the "Northern theme of mortality" he also describes as the "symbolic tragedy of all death, the triumph of Time."[14] This seems to me an interesting addition to the theme of death and one which is particularly appropriate to the elegies. For it is the nature of Time as it is revealed by death which is a major concern of the elegiac poet. It is noticeable that all these elegiac passages dealing with death focus upon the effects of it, particularly on the singer, or on those like him, who have lost what death has taken away. These are the figures who explore death from the point of view of the living. Thus it is in the living present that there "nis þær hearpan sweg,/ gomen in geardum" (2458-9)[15] although it is the memory of the past that has sharpened that present and given it its reality. Thus also, though it is the merrymaking which once was which is vividly brought to life, it is the present

spaciousness about, or loneliness of, the singer, which is the true subject of the elegiac reflection on death. In that loneliness the singer is forced to say that, dead, they are as if they were not, and to become sharply aware, thereby, not only of the difference between death and life, but also of the differences in time that are sharply defined by death.

Time, to the individual experience, is the present moment, for the individual cannot rely on other men to make generations or groups which will lengthen or broaden time beyond this moment. But the present moment is indeed "lœne," fleeting, an immediate and not durable experience. Not for the lone man, therefore, is there the turnover of generations that prefaces Beowulf with its large human landscape. Yet such a landscape is unforgettable to the Wanderer in that it stresses the vulnerability of the individual and his present moment even more. Therefore, the Wanderer's own personal time is like that of the old father in Beowulf, when the halls and generations are empty, and the present moment has therefore no substance; "þuhte him eall to rum,/ wongas ond wicstede" (2461-2).

The only private means of actually perceiving this moment (rather than 'plunging' into it) is through memory (or its partner anticipation). Therefore, the men who trod the mead-floor before the Wanderer now become important:

> hu hi fœrlice flet ofgeafon,
> modge maguþegnas. (61-2)

However an acute 'experience' of the past may become only a final examination of the present as the Wanderer is continually discovering,

a terrifying awareness of its loneliness and transience. Thus the word "hu" opens the whole past experience, as a vivid picture of men pacing, and <u>how</u> they did tread that floor that is gone, then so alive while now they live only in the mind. The "hu" therefore examines the actual living process as much as its loss. Yet its insistence compels the Wanderer into his own present which will soon join the moments of those who crossed the hall before him and be "swa hit no wære" (WL, 24).

There is in "The Seafarer" also a juxtaposition of living men and the memory of them in the superimposing of the men and the seabirds. These images are as searching and passionate as the Wanderer's ghostly memories, and perhaps more immediate because the time-schemes are so compressed:

> þær ic ne gehyrde butan hlimman sæ,
> iscaldne wæg. Hwilum ylfete song
> dyde ic me to gomene, ganetes hleoþor
> ond huilpan sweg fore hleahtor wera,
> mæw singende fore medodrince. (18-22)

Where is the reality? Is it in the sounds and faces and laughter of the past that live in the birds now, or in the birds themselves that take on the shapes of men gone by? However, in "The Seafarer" the seabird mimics also seem more real as if they are filling his lonely existence more adequately, and the men's laughter fades into the noises of the winter seas:

> stormas þær stanclifu beotan, þær him stearn oncwæð
> isigfeþra; ful oft þæt earn bigeal,
> urigfeþra; (23-25)

The time of these exiles is like the time of the sparrow

introduced by Bede into his description of the conversion of the

Northumbrian kingdom to Christianity. It is within the hall briefly

then out in the cold dark lonely world outside its walls:

O King, the present life of man on earth seems to me, in comparison
with the time of which we are ignorant, as if you were sitting at
a feast with your chief men and thanes in the wintertime, and a
fire were kindled in the midst and the hall warmed, while everywhere
outside there were raging whirlwinds of wintry rain and snow; and
as if then there came a stray sparrow, and swiftly flew through
the house, entering at one door and passing out through another.
As long as he is inside, he is not buffeted by the winter's storm;
but in the twinkling of an eye the lull for him is over, and he
speeds from winter back to winter again, and is gone from your
sight. So this life of man appeareth for a little time; but what
cometh after, or what went before, we know not.[16]

The speaker, a counsellor to the king, formulates a perception

that seems to me intimately related to the experience of the elegies.

The hall represents an awareness concentrated upon living itself,

an instant of intensity, vital, warm and full of company. This is

represented in the elegies in the exile's lost communal moment.

Beyond this the world of exile awaits, for the sparrow it is the

winter storms, where it no longer exists as it did in the hall. This

is the "time of which we are ignorant"[17] in which neither the

companionship nor the warmth, nor, in the more comprehensive impli-

cations of the statement made, living itself, are experienced. Yet

there is still an "as if" for the sparrow not only exists within the

hall but also outside, in the empty dark, anticipating and remembering

that rich moment and measuring it by that other experience outside

the hall as that latter experience is measured by the warmth of the

living moment. Thus the exile can perceive the "little time" of
man and also "what went before" and "what cometh after."[18] He does
so in an image that clearly structures these perceptions, doing so by
means of their necessary relationship with each other. This image,
therefore, sums up the exile's condition, and without the lament
supposedly characteristic of his mood.

Nor is it time alone which illustrates the exile's conflict.
The environment is also an image of the tension between the group
and the lone man, between his past and his present. The exile's
mood is often defined by the setting. In "The Wanderer" the exile
occurs in winter and at sea, conditions which emphasise the lone-
liness of the elegiac figure and his "earmcearig" and "earfeþa" (24)
mood. He recalls constantly the contrast between the enclosed
warmth of the mead-hall and the cold dangers of the open sea. The
season also is expressive. The winter which rages in this dark
world, a world which develops from the dark earth enclosing the
lost lord, evoked in terms such as "waþema gebind" (24) "wod winter-
cearig" (24) "snaw, hagle gemenged" (48), is a season that charac-
terises the mood of the man on his own. The misery that arises from
the conflict between companionship and loneliness, continuous past
and brief present, is seen in the Anglo-Saxon winter and night at
sea. In this poem season and setting are used to identify mood, and
from that the quality of the man's experience.

Nils Enkvist in his Seasons of the Year discusses the use of
winter in Old English literature. He claims that the "grimmest season"

reflects not only a "preoccupation with death" but also with "the
end of the world."[19] While, in the elegies, there is little clear
evidence for a preoccupation with the end of the world there is
indeed much for a concern with the end of the individual personality.
Enkvist himself implies this soon after when he says that in "The
Wanderer" "there is a fine instance of this fusion of the winter
image with the idea of imminent destruction of the <u>poet</u>'s universe"
(italics mine). He later says of the elegies that these are
"essentially poems of mood and inner experience"[20] which emphasises
the subjectivity of the statement made in the elegies, and also the
relevance of the environmental representation of mood to this personal
statement for the use of season in elegy seems to me most simply
expressed in his words about "Deor:"

. . . here the season, the terrible winter, again serves to accentuate
the mood of the lamenting poet, now exposed to the merciless cold,
friendless and without a home or the favours of a mighty protector.[21]

The theme of "The Seafarer" also develops from an environmental
contrast between places and seasons. The peopled land enjoys a happy
spring when towns fill with blossoms and birdsongs:

> Bearwas blostmum nimað, byrig fægriað,
> wongas wlitigiað, woruld onetteð; (48-49)

This land is the "foldan fægrost." Yet at this springtime it is
noticeable that the sea is still presented in wintry mood, thundering,
icy, empty of people:

> þæt se mon ne wat
> þe him on foldan fægrost limpeð,
> hu ic earmcearig iscealdne sæ
> winter wunade wræccan lastum,

winemœgum bidroren,
bihongen hrimgicelum; hœgl scurum fleag. (12-17)

The speaker belongs to the sea and therefore shares its lonely mood.

Again the "sparrow image" in Bede is illustrative, for it juxtaposes these two environments of the elegy. Here there is the hall with "chief men and thanes," the "feast" and the "fire kindled," with "the wintry rain and snow"[22] outside. The sparrow flies from "winter back to winter again" through the "hall warmed" as does the elegiac figure on his sea-adventure, perceiving his exile, what "went before" and "what cometh after,"[23] in terms of winter storms, and the "little time" of friendship and rewards, in the image of the hall.

The exile from the epic society in the Wanderer is left alone in the winter season with only his memories of days past when his friends and full group life thronged around him. But memories are not actual experience as the Wanderer's desperate attempt to define them proves. Therefore he is left in that tense condition presented in the poem where those friends who seem so real still, in fact, populate the wintry air as ghosts of the mind:

þonne maga gemynd, mod geondhweorfeð;
greteð gliwstafum, georne geondsceawað
secga geseldan. Swimmað eft on weg! (51-53)

In "The Seafarer" also the group comes to life again in the lonely conditions around the sailor, a living absence like the Wanderer's ghostly companions. Instead of the "gomene" (20) and "hleahtor wera" (21) he hears the "ylfete song" (19) and the "ganetes

hleoþor" (20), but the bird's cries now echo the noise of men.

To both men the result of this conflict is loneliness, a
feeling of isolation in the absence of the group. To the Wanderer
this is a bond, an imprisonment as it were, despite the fact that
his environment is large. Again there is too much room:

> swa ic modsefan minne sceolde,
> oft earmcearig, eðle bidæled,
> freomægum feor feterum sælan, (19-21)

"The Seafarer" differs from "The Wanderer" in that the two conditions
paralleled are drastically opposed, as different as the land and
sea representing them which are so stressed in this poem. "The
Seafarer" also differs in that the "sea-adventure" is chosen:

> Forþon cnyssað nu
> heortan geþohtas, þæt ic hean streamas,
> sealtyþa gelac sylf cunnige;
> monað modes lust mæla gehwylce
> ferð to feran, þæt ic feor heonan
> elþeodigra eard gesece. (33-38)

Nevertheless the knowledge that there is "ne ænig hleomaga" who might
comfort him is as much an incessant counterpoint to the Seafarer's
choice as to the Wanderer's and equally stresses the emptiness of
his manless world. He is still deprived, lacking the company and
security that the men on land possess. Therefore this eagerness for
the "sea-adventure"[24] is still based upon the grief of separation
for he knows well

> hwæt þe sume dreogað
> þe þa wræclastas widost lecgað, (56-57)

Although the choice has been made for the sea, it still means lone-
liness.

The lonely man can be seen in "The Wanderer" and "The Seafarer" in the frequent appearance of the personal "I". Although "The Wanderer" is in subject often impersonal, it is dominated by the experience of the Wanderer, the "anhaga," himself. It is his background alone which proves truths now "Ic to soþe wat" (11); and now since he is deprived of his lord's and his friends' counsels, only his opinions can be voiced. Therefore it is only he, "ic," who "geþencan ne mæg" (58). There is no longer behind this "I" as there is for the hero, a whole body of advice, opinion, tradition and belief. The exile is subordinated to that experience gained when he was thrust alone into life:

> siþþan geara iu goldwine minne
> hrusan heolstre biwrah, ond ic hean þonan   (22-23)

The loss of the lord has deprived him of the group; and "ic" and "minne" insist that this experience is his own, that he is alone now in exile.

The same pattern occurs in "The Seafarer." Although he claims that his is a love all men can share, drawn just when the earth is fairest, "to siþe" (51) "modes fusne" (50), he, nevertheless, is the man who goes. This is his own choice and a choice for which he seems glad to be responsible. He also stresses the "I" using the first person eight times within the opening paragraph. His separation meets his own needs and offers more rewards than does that of the Wanderer:

> Forþon nu min huge hweorfeð ofer hreþerlocan,
> min modsefa mid mereflode
> ofer hwæles eþel hweorfeð wide,

> eorþan sceatas, cymeð eft to me
> gifre ond grædig, gielleð anfloga,
> hweteð on hwælweg hreþer unwearnum
> ofer holm gelagu. (58-64)

and he most postively rejects the communal experience of the indolent

towndwellers.

Yet the background from which the singer in both "The Wanderer"

and "The Seafarer" is separated is his remembered identity. To be

on his own remains, therefore, a dangerous voyage and while he

undertakes the "sea-adventure," he knows also that a very real

identity remains with the group, the memories, the landsmen. The

self that is separated thus from the background that defined him

is therefore deprived of all that made life a reality to him. The

new self that he must live with, this "I" of his, possesses only

his present experience and memories. His loneliness, therefore,

exposes him to his own experience and primarily to his own experience

of himself.

The painful awareness of the new emptiness which encloses him;

found in the Wanderer's memory of how real the lost group's presence

was, "swimmað oft on weg" (53), is also inherent in the lord's

burial for the dark earth enclosing the corpse becomes from then on

the cold darkness of the seas which surround the exile. This is the

darkness which awaits those who lose the group, for they lose the life,

the structure, to which they had belonged, and alone, they have no

means of identifying themselves as the coldness and darkness of the

winter seas imply. This is the lonely self, the "I", with which the

exile must now live.

CHAPTER III

THE EXILE VERSUS SOCIETY

Elegiac images of time and environment recur throughout Old

English poetry, but they are focussed upon the figure of exile who

finds his full statement in the lyrical poem of the elegy. This

prevailing mood can be expected to have some relevance to Old

English society. Some of the implications are referred to in this

quotation from Nils Enkvist's Seasons of the Year[1] in which he describes

the transitional state of religious belief in Anglo-Saxon society:

> While the Scandinavians were still preoccupied with Germanic myth,
> in England contacts with the new faith had scattered the old beliefs
> and driven their fragments into the superstitions of daily life. In
> comparison, Anglo-Saxon poetry appears rationalistic, not mythical;
> realistic in its descriptions; and full of a profound and tragic
> feeling of death.[2]

Here again Bede's description of the sparrow image is relevant. These

words are spoken by a counsellor of King Edwin at a time when the old

values of the group, its pagan religion, have lost their meaning.

The high priest has just confessed their futility. These values would

have made sense of the experience in the hall through the warrior

virtues, and outside it, in the extension of these virtues after

death, in fame, and their repetition in the halls of heroes. The

conclusion drawn from these words of the counsellor looks forward

to a future with a new meaning where the winter world is transformed

into the sunny heaven of the Christian religion.[3] Meanwhile the

counsellor has presented a matter-of-fact argument for the convenience

of the Christian future which would seem to reject the experience

of the exile. And yet neither the image itself nor the argument it

illustrates seems to me to actually deny that experience. Rather,

the counsellor speaks for the new Christian certainties with the

resigned pragmatism of the comment on Scyld's funeral in Beowulf:

> Men ne cumnon
> secgan to soðe, selerædende,
> hæleð under heofenum, hwa þæm hlæste onfeng.[4]

where the stress is on the fact that no-one can truly say who

received that cargo.

Enkvist uses the two extremes, the "Germanic myth" and the

"new faith," both still extant in Old English culture, to argue

that the transition from one to the other is expressed in seasonal

imagery:

. . . the Christian poets of Anglo-Saxon England were beginning to
walk the unfamiliar paths towards a sophistication that was to
enable English poetry to escape the bonds of time and place. From
a narrow, yet vivid poetic tradition, where the terror of winter
reigned supreme, they have transcended the fear of death and taken
us to more cheerful spheres of sunshine, pleasant weather, greenery,
sweet scents and birdsong.[5]

The result is that

It is in their religious poetry that the Anglo-Saxons first
attempted to celebrate the actual, concrete delights of the pleasing
seasons.[6]

Yet the blend of pagan and Christian is, in fact, unresolved in epic

and elegiac poetry and the "pleasing seasons" of the fully Christiani-

sed outlook rarely appear there. Instead the hall takes their place

as the opposition to the wintry season and the darker storms of life,

and death. Nor does this seem to me necessarily a less sophisticated

position, lyrically.

This argument has implied that in religion, at least, Old English culture is in a transitional state. Historical evidence suggests that this transitional condition may also be argued for Old English society. Such a condition would be relevant to the epic theme, and to its elegiac content.

W. W. Lawrence, when discussing this background in _Beowulf and the Epic Tradition_[7] suggests that _Beowulf_ is composed as an illustration of the "god cyning" in times when kings were not so good:

It is highly significant that, in days of constant warfare and violence and self-seeking in the northern kingdoms of England, these wise and temperate words [Beowulf's own summary of his reign 11. 2732-43] could have been written.[8]

He claims that the end of _Beowulf_ was designed "to celebrate the two great ideals of warrior life: the conduct of the perfect retainer and the conduct of the perfect king."[9] This suggests that Beowulf is purposefully compared with Hroðgar, the aging king, and that he is set in a pattern of great lords to substantiate the ideal. In such a pattern his death demonstrates an inevitable decline in the fortunes of a group that has lost its noble lord, a decline that occurs because the group itself has failed those ideals that make heroes, either of kings or of groups. Such an interpretation of the poem as an "exemplum" implies a setting for its composition in an unheroic and perhaps disorderly kingdom. It would certainly mean a leadership that the author felt had betrayed the heroic ideals, and a society, dependent on those leaders, equally lax in its response to the code. Such circumstances can be argued for the

eighth century kingdoms of Northern England.

Such a background would be important not only to the epic

but also to the elegies. Although the evidence as to their origin

is inconclusive, as it is for <u>Beowulf</u> also, there is a possibility

that the source for both is similar, a region of North Eastern

England, and the elegies themselves are, in fact, often identified

as the Northumbrian elegies.[10] In the case of the elegies,

however, the author's motive is not instruction so much as an

attempt to express and understand the loss felt.

The crisis for the Wanderer and the Seafarer, as for Beowulf,

may, therefore, have been public, rooted in the whole of Northumbrian

society. If these poems were composed around the critical period

at the turn of the eighth century, that is, from 775-825, a not

unpopular[11] date for both <u>Beowulf</u> and the elegies, then the decay

of the heroic society may be demonstrated from Northumbrian history.

For a considerable period, certainly from the time of Edwin, 616-32,

Northumbria had been governed by a flourishing dynasty to which it

owed its stability and glory. Of Edwin, Stenton says: "He is

described by Bede as more powerful than any earlier English King, . . ."[12]

and as "undoubtedly the head of the greatest confederation which as

yet had arisen in England."[12] He is also "a typical king of the

Heroic Age."[12], that is, in "character and environment he belonged

to the world depicted in Old English heroic poetry."[12] Therefore,

although his kingdom "foreshadowed a kingdom of all England, . . ."[13]

he stands in history as a great king of the age of national [13]
migrations rather than as the predecessor of Offa or Alfred.

That is, that he belonged to the heroic past rather than to the

English future of the kings of Mercia and Wessex.

But Edwin's line remained strong and under it Northumbria

grew to a maturity of which it could, later, be proud. Through

the saintly Oswald, 633-41, the king had been transformed into a

Christian hero, yet was still recognisably a fighting heroic king

under whom the kingdom grew, if artificially. Oswiu, 651-70,

became, briefly, "overlord, not only of the Mercians, but of all

the southern English peoples."[14] Ecgfrith, 685-70, who was mainly

successful in raids northwards "was recognized as overlord by the

Irish of Argyll and the Britons of Strathclyde."[15] The last of

these kings was Aldfrith under whom the kingdom ripened fully.

Aldfrith re-established Northumbria, after Ecgfrith's fatal raid

into Scotland which ended at the battle of Nechtanesmere, and

ensured the defence of his kingdom. In this more secure and peaceful,

if narrower, kingdom, the learning and scholarship of "the age of

Bede"[16] flourished; made possible by the nature of Aldfrith himself:

He is the most interesting member of the remarkable dynasty to
which he belonged, and he stands beside Alfred of Wessex among the
few Old English kings who combined skill in warfare with desire for
knowledge.[16]

From this well-established and capable line of kings, therefore,

the region derived its fame and dignity, but, after Aldfrith's reign,

the dynasty declined:[17]

> But thenceforward the succession of kings belonging to the ancient dynasty was repeatedly broken by kings of whose descent nothing is known.

and with its decline the kingdom deteriorated, although never completely, for "the age could show both virtuous kings and loyal retainers."[18] It is, therefore, "a superficial view which dismisses the Northumbrian history of this period as a mere record of treason and murder."[19] Nevertheless, Stenton himself admits that:

> It is clear that the traditional loyalty of the retainer towards his chief was weakening, and that evil men could seize and for a time retain the crown.[19]

Northumbria in the eighth century is, therefore, aware of terrifying and shameful lapses from heroic standards which are nevertheless still a living force to be honoured and admired, although it may be that these standards had never been fully realised since Edwin's death in 632. This would give rise to the moral theme of Beowulf explaining the frequent exemplary passages where the tone becomes didactic as the poet almost turns to warn and condemn the audience for their failure to live up to the ideal just announced.[20] But from such a situation also arises the elegiac lament of the old hero for past glory, for the heroic past is still an actuality and in all the elegiac passages in Beowulf and in the elegies the awareness of the reality of this lost past is intense.

In addition these elegiac passages are informed with a mood which grows into a recognisable literary topic during these Dark and Middle Ages, the 'ubi sunt' theme. This theme could be taken to characterise some aspects of these centuries. It is a mood too

insistent to be dissipated by the "pleasing seasons" of the

Christian world, of the City of God and its new glories. It may

be that this theme is connected with the fall of that other City,

of Rome, and the loss of order and purpose that this meant, for

these ages could be seen as constantly struggling to rebuild and

revitalise the secular world. Certainly, even those bewildered

tribes who were not included within this immense and stable

institution of 'Rome,' the Germanic peoples, felt the loss of this

example of permanence and security on earth, as the perplexed

observer of the Roman past in "The Ruin" testifies.

In the Germanic mind such a mood might be accentuated by the

Northern mythology which Bertha Philpotts describes as a belief in

"foreordained defeat" in which men and gods co-operate "in resisting

the forces of destruction at the end of the world,"[21] for the myths

foreshadow the idea of a universe sustained by a balance between
conflicting forces, (cf. Chapter II) and of its end brought about
by elements of destruction within itself.[22]

Thus the "Ragnarrok:"

> 'Neath sea the land sinketh, the sun dimmeth,
> from the heavens fall the fair bright stars;
> gusheth forth steam and gutting fire,
> to very heaven soar the hurtling flames.[23]

Any regeneration seems only a golden calm in which the gods come to

life again only to remember the past:

> I see green again with growing things
> the earth arise from out of the sea;
> . . . .
> . . . .

> Again the Aesir on the Plain meet
> and speak of the mighty Mithgarth-Worm –
> again go over the great world-doom,
> and Fimbultyr's unfathomed runes.
>
> Then the grass, the golden figures,
> the far-famed ones, will be found again,
> which they had owned in olden days.[24]

A golden peace this is, but one in which all meaningful things belong to the past and only memory is active.

The elegiac passages, the history of Northumbria, the mythology and the 'ubi sunt' theme, all share an accentuation of a valuable past and an emphasis on memory as a means of communicating with it. All seem to stress the transitional state of the present, a transition which provides an unstable background for the singers. It forces these singers to consider a choice between seemingly antagonistic directions, either backwards into the past or forwards into the unknown, unheroic and solitary future, and compels them to find some resolution of this conflict for themselves.

The elegiac figure in Old English literature is, therefore, projected as in a transitional state between a group existence and a solitary life. The transitional nature of his condition is expressed in the vivid representation of both experiences; that is, not only in his awareness of his present loneliness but also in his memory of the group life that is past. His present state is defined as solitude, although the variable forms this condition assumes, the use of "I", the sense of separation from communal living and the loneliness of his experience, suggest that this state might be more valuably described as individuality.

The content of his struggle is a preoccupation with time and
place. Time occurs in this struggle as a definition of both life
and death and is, as a result, descriptive of the individual
experience of existence. Place occurs as a lonely uneasy state of
mind in which both life and death as perceived by that individuality
must be taken fully into account. From this struggle the elegiac
figure recognises the flux of the world bestowed upon his individual
experience by the senses and memory, and accepts as the property of
that flux, mortality. However mortality is not accepted for itself
alone but as an urgent expression of the act of living as himself.
For his sense of time and place, his memory of the group, his feeling
of separation and loneliness, and of the transience of all these
experiences, all sharpen his sense of himself, a sense emerging
because he is the pivot of these tensions.

These pressures seem to cohere into a language for certain
Anglo-Saxon experiences which provides the elegiac rather than
the epic formulæ, and these pressures also, I believe, make the
comment the exile figure is required to make in his transitional
state between a fully public and a fully private existence, the
elegy, into a lyrical song.

CHAPTER IV

WOMAN AS EXILE

The basic pattern of the exile is presented by the male singer. However, the singer of the elegies is not always a man for two of the poems purport to be by women. In these, "The Wife's Lament" and "Wulf and Eadwacer," there is not only a difference in sex, but also in subjects and relationships. The relationship is no longer between a lone figure and a community but between a lone woman and a shared existence with her lover. The implications of this contrast are not so much social, that is between communal and individual existence, as emotional. In these poems the bond is one of love, enjoyed and lost.

Both these songs belong to a recognisable tradition of women's songs which define women's experience in the theme of love. These are the 'winileodas,' known as Frauenlied in Germanic Europe, the women's invitation to love, and belong to a tradition which is met in all corners of Europe and the Middle East in the years of the Dark Ages and even later. Yet, despite this difference in origin, the two old English women's songs share with "The Wanderer" and "The Seafarer" the elegiac-lyric patterns established above.

The woman's role in public life in a military society was limited by physique and tradition. It is bounded by the home and its occupants. It is only, therefore, in her concern with the intimacies of daily life and in the intercourse between the sexes in particular, that the woman will find expression. It might be

expected that, in the aggressively masculine society of the Dark
Ages, this expression would not be public. However, the 'Frauenlied'
tradition brings to light a whole body of woman's song dealing with
love and physical passion, and this collection of songs was, it
must be presumed, shared by the community for which it was recorded,
to which community the woman's experience seems therefore to have
been of interest. It is useful, again, to compare these women as
they appear in the Old English elegiac song with their epic counter-
parts to assess the differences between the heroic and lyric setting.

In Beowulf the woman's part in the action is a minor one. She
appears mainly in connection with peace. But this is a group role
dependent upon the lord who gives her a position in society which
will make her effective. The three women introduced into the action
are characterised primarily as peacemakers or peacebreakers, with an
influence derived only from marriage. This is found in the sufferings
of Hildeburh and of the luckless Freawaru, whose marriages are
attempts to end tribal enmity, and in the danger of Thryð, so
ironically endowed with the synonym for woman, "freoðuwebbe," the
peace-weaver, when she destroys the peace she should be weaving.

These stories imply that woman means coherence and peace to
the aggressive group:

> (h)afað þæs geworden wine Scyldinga,
> rices hyrde, ond þæt ræd talað,
> þæt he mid ðy wife wælfæhða dæl,
> sæcca gesette. (2026-29)[1]

If she rejects this role, however, woman is as damaging as is Thryð
and denies her femininity:

> Ne biờ swylc cwenlic þeaw
> idese to efnanne, þeah ðe hio ænlicu sy,
> þætte freoðuwebbe feores onsæce
> æfter ligetorne leofne mannan.   (1940-43)

When she fails thus, the group returns to its natural warlike purpose.

Against this purpose the woman is essentially powerless[2] and her

active role, limited to that of peacemaker, becomes correspondingly

irrelevant since it is contrary to the objectives of the military

group:

> Oft seldan hwær
> æfter leodhryre lytle hwile
> bongar bugeð, þeah seo bryd duge! (2029-31)

However, the woman's true, if inactive, role in heroic society

is demonstrated by Wealhðeow, Hroþgar's queen. Although she appears

also to make an effort for peace in asking for Beowulf's protection

for her sons, her presence is not essentially related to the action

of the poem. Her basic function in the structure of the poem is as

a support to her lord in his social duties, uniting the group. The

lord and his wife together make of the male military group a full

human community. It is primarily as a reflection of this social

blessing that even the woman's peacemaking role is introduced. Thus

at the feasts celebrating the opening and conclusion of Beowulf's

first struggle Wealhðeow's appearances draw the men together with a

kind of ritual formality:

> Eode Wealhðeow forð,
> cwen Hroðgares cynna gemyndig,
> grette goldhroden guman on healle,
> ond þa freolic wif ful gesealde
> ærest East-Dena eþelwearde,
> bæd hine bliðne æt þære beorþege,

> leodum leofne; he on lust geþeah
> symbel ond seleful, sigerof kyning.
> Ymbeode þa ides Helminga
> duguþe ond geogoþe dæl æghwylcne,
> sincfato sealde, oþ þæt sæl alamp,
> þæt hio Beowulfe, beaghroden cwen
> mode geþungen medoful ætbær;
> grette Geata leod, Gode þancode
> wisfæst wordum þæs ðe hire se willa gelamp,
> þæt heo on ænigne eorl gelyfde
> fyrena frofre.   (612-31)

and she repeats this action later with her plea for protection for

her sons and for peace. Later, as a contrast to Thryð, Hygd, is

introduced as the model heroic woman:

> Hygd swiðe geong,
> wis welþungen, þeah ðe wintra lyt
> under burhlocan gebidan hæbbe,
> Hæreþes dohtor; næs hio hnah swa þeah,
> ne to gneað gifa Geata leodum,
> maþmgestreona.   (1926-31)

The position represented by Hygd and Wealhðeow creates bonds

of respect and admiration rather than a closer and more personal

devotion; and, therefore, also because it is non-aggressive, the

woman's appearance in the epic song of Beowulf is shadowy and brief.

She does, however, reappear in songs more suited to the development

of this public character, as in "Widsiþ." When Widsiþ sings of

Ealhild, the queen of Eadgils, his lord, he might almost be singing

of her as a troubadour of the Middle Ages would have done, as a

precious being whose beauties must be broadcast to be appreciated:

> Hyre lof lengde geond londa fela,
> þonne ic be songe secgan sceolde (99-100)[3]

Yet Ealhild is no love-object of a Provençal poet, but still the

queen of a heroic world:

> hwær ic under swegle   selast wisse
> goldhrodene cwen   giefe bryttian.   (101-2)

The minstrel's admiration is for impersonal graces and not individual
charms.   Like Wealhðeow and Hygd she is praised because she is the
"golhrodene cwen" and the "giefe bryttian" and, like them, she is,
therefore, praised solely by right of her value to the community as
wife to its lord.

The public figure appears in clearer outline in "The Husband's
Message."[4]   This song describes an heroic match between a "þeod" (29)
and a "þeodnes dohtor" (47) who have been separated for years.   The
man asks her to join him.   His offer is that of a successful lord,
defined by what he owns, "elþeode eþel healde" (37), and is an
invitation to share his rank.   His 'wooing' is done with formal
compliment through a third 'person' to a 'sinchroden,' and with
considerable respect for their partnership for:

> Ne mæg him worulde   willa gelimpan
> Mara on gemyndum,   þæs þe he me sægde,
> þonne inc geunne   alwaldend god
> [. . . .] ætsomne   siþþan motan
> secgum ond gesiþum   s[. . . . . .]   (30-35)

His plea is made with full consciousness of his own dignity which
he seems to feel the best argument for his case.   Although his words
indicate a feeling of incompleteness without his lady which is moving
his plea is never undignified because the invitation is never
presented as other than a social need:

> Nu se mon hafað
> wean oferwunnen;   nis him wilna gad,
> ne meara ne maðma   ne meododreama,
> ænges ofer eorþan   eorlgestreona,
> þeodnes dohtor,   gif he þin beneah   (43-46)

Though there is doubt, there is no urgency in his pleas for his

own restraint, and the use of the intermediary 'messenger,' the

puzzling staff, prevent this. Even without these restrictions,

the situation he must overcome, of the years of concern with other

more pressing matters, struggle and safety, would argue against any

convincing desperation for her. His is not a passion for a beautiful

and intimate companion but a need for a beloved queen. He offers

her a public love, sealed privately in youth perhaps "þa wære ond þa

winetreowe" (51) "þe git on ærdagum oft gespræconn" (53). But now

it is a mature bond, courteously expressed, a service to his new

people whose society will be completed when the "þeodnes dohtor"

becomes their lady.

Within the structure of public life so far illustrated in Old

English literature, the private life of woman continues. It is

indicated briefly in one of the Maxims from the <u>Exeter Book</u>, where

the details of her relationship with the man in the home are referred

to. The comment is not about influential people as elsewhere but

on ordinary seamen and their wives. It is preserved in Anglo-Saxon

although it suggests the wider community to which the Saxons belonged,

referring to the Frisians:

> leof wilcuma
> Frysan wife, þonne flota stonde ;
> biþ his ceol cumen ond hyre ceorl to ham,
> agen ætgeofa, ond heo hine in laðaþ,
> wæsceð his warig hrægl ond him syleþ wæde niwe,
> (94-98)[5]

These few words indicate more than the daily routine of the woman.

With a restraint equal to that of "The Husband's Message" the words

reveal the very intimacies the 'husband' has avoided. The "ceol"

is not any vessel but "his" and this stress on him in this sentence

shows the sudden fullness of her life when he returns "agen ætgeofa"

(my italics). This practical description of their relationship

becomes steadily more personal through the increasing possessiveness

of the pronouns. There is no other for her. Nor is he only "ætgeofa"

but "agen" and also "leof," and loved with all the matured intimacy

of wedded life, the "wilcuma" who makes the home real once more, "ond

hyre ceorl to ham."

The simple evocation of love through small routine actions such

as, "wæsce his warig hrægl" has a dignity equal to "The Husband's

Message" and all the intensity the other lacks. This blend of reserve

and passion rendered in simple actions[6] is characteristic of the

woman's song. This Maxim is also relevant to the elegiac mood in

its evocation of years of marriage through one occasion which is

definitive:

> Lida biþ longe on siðe; a mon sceal seþeah leofes wenan,
> gebidan þæs he gebædan ne mæg.   (103)

Yet this use of the present to represent a sequence of actions dis-

tinguishes the Maxim from the elegiac verse clearly, placing it, as

also "The Ruin," somewhere between the epic and the elegiac mood

and time-scheme. All the moments in these passages both past and

present, are distant, as if viewed from afar. Again, although the

passage shows a moving awareness of the bond between man and woman,

as "The Ruin" shows a similar awareness of the importance of the

loss of the group, it remains impersonal. It is an accurate record of experience but leaves the observer-recorder in a detached and descriptive relationship with his material. Therefore, his achievement in these lines is to immobilise generations of such couples in the brief picture of the Maxim but not to make them personal; for the full arrested life of these figures has more the impersonality of epic continuity.

The full love song of the woman in "The Wife's Lament" and "Wulf and Eadwacer" is neither detached, nor committed to public duties. Like "The Wanderer" and "The Seafarer" it sets out to be a personal statement evoking the personality and emotions of the particular singer engaged in the situation. In these songs patterns emerge similar to those found in the songs of the male elegiac singers. These women also are exiles, whose relationship with the group is still important, though broken, and they are also aware of time and place. And for these women too their song means some discovery of their identity.

In "The Wife's Lament" the woman's emphasis on individuality is again shown in the stress on the lyrical "I". In the first six lines of the poem references to herself occur ten times. It is her own song she sings, "minre sylfre sið" (2) and she alone is singing it "ic þis giedd wrece" (1). It is also a tale of exile although this exile is an emotional one, a loss of love. With the love is lost also the identity and security that the man, "min hlaford" (6), gave her through the company and status she owned within his group.

That is, she has lost that which made her the heroic woman, that
which the wooed wife in "The Husband's Message" is returning to
after long parting. The woman in "The Wife's Lament" is left alone,
without either man or group, the "wineleas wræcca" (10) again. The
loss means lack of belonging, of recognition and security, of loyal
friends:

> ahte ic leofra lyt   on þissum londstede
> holdra freonda.   (16-17)

and therefore she grieves

> Forþon is min hyge geomor, (17)

Her misery is not brought to life in the season or in the seas
but it is still evoked by the environment, and the result is much
the same. The gloom and dark of absence in this poem arise from the
"dena dimme" in which she now lives:

> Heht mec mon wunian   on wuda bearwe,
> under actreo   in þam eorð scræfe.
> Eald is þes eorð sele,   eal ic eom onflongad,
> sindon dena dimme,   duna uphea,
> bitre burgtunas,   brerum beweaxne,   (27-31)

This is the joyless setting, the "wic wynna leas" (32), which is
the environment of all four of these poems.

The contrast in this poem is not between land and sea, lorded
and lordless, companioned and lonely, though some of these are
subsidiary results of her condition, but between the loved and the
loveless. It is those who still love, who are loved, who people her
emptiness. Their beds are warm, possessed--"weardiað"

> Frynd sind on eorþan
> leofe lifgende, leger weardiað,   (33-34)

The bed is the focus of this loss, contrasting the one alone,

exiled from it, with the fulfilled lovers "þonne ic uhtan ana

gonge" (35) in the dawn, "uhtan," the time of parting when lovers

who are secure are still resting. Before her there lies the

"sumorlangne dæg" (37), a concentrated and ironic use of weather

for mood, for the long summer day is the time for warmth and love,

while she sits alone in the cooler dawn, not only for this day

but for all the days long of the summer, a summer-long day, lamenting

her loss and exile.

In "The Wife's Lament" as in "The Wanderer" time is important.

It is the changing from what was to what is now that oppresses her,

particularly as the past had seemed so secure

> Bliþe gebæro ful oft wit beotedan
> þæt unc ne gedælda nemne deað ana   (21-22)

but the parting came and all the loneliness of being without him,

the loneliness of herself, and no such disaster as death was needed

to bring it about. What was once so full is now gone

> Eft is þæt onhworfen,
> is nu * * * swa hit no wære   (23-24)

These words recall the lines in "The Wanderer" on the lost company

> Hu seo þrag gewat
> genap under nihthelm swa heo no wære (95-96)[7]

Again, it does not matter whether it is death or parting that has

intervened, it is the result which baffles and distresses. The

substantial man disappears into darkness as if he had never come

into being, and yet he had indeed been. Equally the substantial

relationship, once so trusted, vanishes as if it had meant nothing.

Both these "swa (heo/hyt) no were" phrases are essentially inquiring

about the frailty and actuality of being and experience. To the

Wife the total passion that made them inseparable unless prised

apart by death, cannot be ended. To have been separated and yet

still exist, exiled in darkness, seems to her a mockery of existence.

Yet it is in this darkness that she, and the Wanderer, and even

more assertively, the Seafarer, can use the "I", and can say 'myself'.

The other short poem from the Exeter Book, "Wulf and Eadwacer,"

is now usually interpreted as a woman's song, although there has

been much discussion of its meaning.[8] I have accepted the rendering

which sees the singer as wife of the man Eadwacer, grieving over

separation from her lover, Wulf. I would not, however, press the

case for this poem since allowance must be made for its obscurity.

My only justification for my position is that the poem so clearly

evokes the spirit of the Frauenlied in its utterance on love and

the lover. I would, therefore, claim this poem simply as a possible,

but not essential, confirmation of my argument.

The poem also makes a significant use of the first person

singular pronoun, significant here not so much in frequency as in

structure. The first part of the poem is shaped into verses by the

refrain "ungelic is us" (3).[9] The first of these verses opens

with a communal use of the personal pronoun "Leodum ist minum"

(1) which is paired with one particular man making it therefore

more personal to her. In the succeeding verse, however, this "I"

and the man are paired together by their positions on two separate

islands: "Wulf is on iege, ic on oþerre" (4) and the second refrain

is followed by a second pairing, this time of the "I" and the

weather which seem thereby to be implicitly identified: "þonne hit

wæs renig weder ond ic reotugu sæt," (10). Finally the possessively

personal pronouns take over in the lines devoted most passionately

to the lover:

> Wulf, min Wulf, wena me þine,
> seoce gedydon, þine seldcymas,
> murnende mod, nales meteliste.   (13)

The structure of the poem grows, therefore, out of reiterated personal

pronouns which increase in intensity through their relation to the

content of the text, particularly to the singer's mood.

The use of environment in this poem has the clarity of "The

Seafarer." The bond of broken love is shown dramatically in the

two islands, one for the woman, one for the man, describing a

separation. Her island is also a "wic wynna leas" pictured briefly

but no less tellingly in this poem as the unwelcoming marshes:

> Fæst is þæt eglond, fenne biworpen.   (15)

This setting also implies imprisonment. The single reference to

weather is equally elegiac, for it rains, creating a picture of cold

rainswept darkening fens. Here also the weather is clearly allied

with mood in the simple juxtaposition of words: "þonne hit wæs

renig weder ond ic reotugu sæt"(10) (italics mine). This suggests

an identification of their 'tears' so clear as to be almost a

pathetic fallacy.

The place is also defined in this poem by references to the

group. This island is not only a prison which isolates her from her

lover in a sombre setting, it is also the home of her tribe. This group is hostile, a threat to her lover, and a barrier around her. They are possibly described as cruel men who will kill--"willað hy hine aþecgan, gif he on þreat cymeð." (7). They are also defending her fastness against Wulf "Fæst is þæt eglond," (5) for it is manned by "wælreowe weras" (6). These sections imply that either her group has withdrawn its support or, if the other translation is valid, "Will they feed him if he should feel want?"[10] Wulf's, for she fears hostile action from some direction. Rejection of either of the lovers of course, applies to the other, as their love has made them one.

These encircling people define her isolation by adding their enmity to the wildness and confinement of the islands. These references also indicate a complete separation between her values and those of the group. This is accentuated by her relationship with Eadwacer. This "beaducafa" (11), who belongs obviously to her own people and gives her a public place as the heroic woman when he takes her in his arms, "bogum bilegde" (11), becomes the focus of all the comparisons she is making. Eadwacer has emerged only half way through the poem and is clearly related, as "beaducafa," to the "Leodum" and to the "wælreowe weras," of whichever island group they inhabit, and therefore becomes a personalizing of those groups into a single focal figure. It is between Eadwacer and Wulf that the woman finally chooses "Gehyrest þu, Eadwacer?" (16) as she rejoices in committing her son to her lover. At the same time she

rejects "þætte næfre gesomnad wæs" (18), which is the mating with Eadwacer.

As with "The Seafarer," time is represented in this poem more laterally, or by place, rather than lineally, or chronologically. That is, time is condensed into the image of the replacement of the lovers' shared life and their true love bond, by the bleak, separated and imprisoning islands populated with fierce and vengeful men. This latter isolation succeeds the former union. The link between the two states is made temporal by the lingering echoes of the despairing refrain "Ungelic is us" which reminds, in several layers, of the past, the present and of what might have been, and laments the loss, or perhaps all loss.

But specific loss there has been, and a personal one. The fullness of emotion expressed in the passionate cry to the lover "Wulf, min Wulf," reveals a total dependence on true love which transcends all practical realities, hunger, separation, the group and her public lover, the husband Eadwacer. Not only her position on the island, not only her grief, but her whole being seems to be derived from this private relationship with one man, discovered through the intimacies of love. There is a sense in this poem, therefore in which individuality conquers time, through the complete commitment to Wulf. The reality of their passion transcends loss and is pro- jected into the future through their son:

> Gehyrest þu, Eadwacer? Uncerne earne hwelp
> bireð wulf to wuda.
> þæt mon eaþe toslite   þætte næfre gesomnad wæs,
> uncer giedd geador.   (16-19)

This poem certainly seems to share with "The Seafarer" a resolution in facing this individual choice and a conviction as to its value, more positive than that of "The Wanderer" and "The Wife's Lament."

The darkness of loss in the two women's elegies is related essentially to the emotional emptiness of the father mourning his dead son in Beowulf, since these losses occur also because of the breaking of a love-bond, and leave the singer isolated in grief. From this darkness a full personality emerges. This being is the woman within the heroic wife of the epic song. In both these peoms the woman is aware of the loss of her role as public wife, a role which the Wife can no longer play owing to her husband's defection and one which the singer in "Wulf and Eadwacer" rejects. In the former poem, her response to the hostility of husband and group is rejection, which creates a latent tension, for she struggles to withhold the response she would naturally give. In the latter, the public and private roles hopelessly confuse her action, but not her commitment to her personal existence.

Therefore the group's distant hostility in "The Wife's Lament" in fact shapes the emotional dilemma with which she struggles, while in "Wulf and Eadwacer" the more open war with the group and its dictation of her actions, produces a position very like the well-defined inhibition of the Seafarer's personal needs by the group. In both these women's songs, however, the conflict between group and individual existence is resolved by a natural election of the private life, which is represented by the love both women affirm. Nor does

this life seem to possess quite the novelty it does to the men

which is perhaps due to the fact that woman's role in the military

heroic group is so limited, and perhaps also to the possibility that

woman is essentially less public and more easily reverts to the

personal.

The heroic woman who appears in the elegies seems to be a

passionate and realistic creature. She emerges as one to whom love

is a real appetite which she enjoys. In "The Wife's Lament" the

source of her grief is loss of fulfilment, openly avowed in the

memory of the bed they once shared and all the pleasures and warmth

of loving 'friends' she misses. In "Wulf and Eadwacer" this "open

desire for a man"[11] which Frings describes as basic to the "_Frauenlied_"

tradition, is seen in the ambiguity of her response to her two men:

> þonne mec se beaducafa bogum bilegde,
> wæs me wyn to þon, wæs me hwæþre eac lað. (11-12)

Her appetite leads her to faithless enjoyment which simultaneously

grieves her thereby accentuating the truer union with Wulf which

includes lovemaking but is so much more. And the last lines indicate

again her belief in two kinds of love bonds, one breakable, the other

not.

This personality is not only seen in the free expression of

her physical needs but also in her sure commitment to her personal

life. This she readily experiences, although it brings confusion

and frustration, as it does to the Wife who is friendless, perplexed

by outward appearances and in a joyless place. Yet this is her own

life as the woman in "Wulf and Eadwacer" asserts as she survives
the enmities of the group, rejecting them for her personal belief
in her own love. The frequent use of the personal "I" to refer
to her own life and not to any group values or purposes is evidence
of this identity. She perceives the life and people around her
through the demands of her own nature, can recognise that nature as
her own, and name it "I", and is confident enough of it to arti-
culate it and attempt to satisfy its demands.

CHAPTER V

EPIC VERSUS ELEGY

During this discussion of the epic and the elegy it has become
apparent that they are not self-contained and clearly defined forms
in Old English literature. Thus, in the Old English epic there are
elegiac passages that might be extracted and re-worked into elegies.
If these were the only examples of the elegiac mood in Old English
they could be considered as interludes and the problem would resolve
itself into a consideration of the function of elegiac mood within
an epic structure, and of the distinction between this mood and the
fully-formed elegies. However, it is not in these episodes alone that
the elegiac mood invades the Old English epic. Instead it encroaches
upon the whole structure of the poem so that <u>Beowulf</u> could be viewed
as an elegiac presentation of epic material.

Even the opening of <u>Beowulf</u> suggests an elegiac tone. The
poem begins with a sequence of lost generations, a sequence that is
only narrowed down to representative action after some time of
rumination. The poem proceeds from its opening:

> Hwæt, we Gardena   in geardagum,
> þeodcyninga   þrym gefrunon, (1-2)[1]

with its emphasis on ancient glory, to the story of Scyld Scefing,
who seems to be included as a "god cyning" (11), and from him to his
son, "geong in geardum" (13), a Beowulf but not the hero. This
first Beowulf whose "blæd wide sprang" (18), is an interruption in
the history of Scyld which latter is completed with a lament for his
"gescæphwile:"

> Him ða Scyld gewat   to gescæphwile
> felahror feran   on Frean wære;   (26-27)

The lament describes the burial ship in wintertime and it recalls

the sorrow of the final departure:

>   him wæs geomor sefa,
> murnende mod.   Men ne cunnon
> secgan to soðe,   seleredende,
> hæleð under heofenum,   hwa þæm hlæste onfeng.
>   (49-50)

Even when this sequence is completed yet another generation

is to be introduced "Heorogar and Hroðgar ond Halgar til" (61) before

the second Beowulf appears. Within this sequence there is not only

a concern with men not obviously related to the story, so that the

events presented are not immediate and particular, but also there

is an emphasis on the historical past of this group and on its

transience, which latter can be seen in the insistence on the funeral

lament for the death of a man only connected to the hero of the

story by the name of his son.

Such an approach to the epic is not characteristic of all

heroic groups as can be seen in the concise and active opening of

the Greek epics. In the Odyssey the line invoking the Muse passes

into the reference to he who "had sacked Troy's sacred citadel,"[2]

his "pains" "on the wide sea,"[3] and a brief account of the sufferings

of his companions, and then the poet begins his story with the

words:

> . . . in the circling of years that very year came
> in which the gods had spun for him his time of homecoming.

In all it needs only twenty-two lines to start the action in the

narrative present tense with the God Poseidon. In the <u>Iliad</u> there
are only twelve lines of introduction by which time Chryses

came to the fleete to buy
For presents of unvalued price, his daughter's libertie[5]

during which introduction Achilles and the gods have been disposed
of. In this poem also the opening of the narrative is indicated by
the change to active present rather than reflective past tenses. In
each of these epics there is an urgent narrowing down of the intro-
duction to a focus on the narrative present, which gives an objective
and dramatic quality to the verse and the events, a quality which is
suitable to action. The poet's self-assurance about the narrative
is seen in his confident sense of time and place.

In <u>Beowulf</u> however the sense of the past is dominant, giving
an extra dimension to the opening of the narrative, for the first
story line "þa wæs Hroðgare heresped gyfen," (64) is still groping
in a time sequence of the past. In addition, this new generation
which is the background of Beowulf's story seems to have been imposed
upon an ancient sequence, historically recounted, which is now being
forced into the present tense. This preliminary sequence gains most
of its personality and assurance from the one episode fully described
amid the list of glories. This is the older hero's funeral with its
acceptance of fate, the bleak delineation of the ceremony given to
a man whose life seems to be fulfilled only by the sequences following
the moment of death. In addition this funeral lament fits the
elegiac pattern, in the setting of a winter season, in the lament

for the king's vanished existence and in the doubt of a substantial
future presence for him indicated in the words:

> Men ne cunnon
> secgan to soðe, selerædende,
> hæleð under heofenum, hwa þæm hlæste onfeng.
> (50-52)

This introduction to Beowulf can be justified, not as in
earlier epics, as an anticipation of the story which also sets the
scene and impels to action, but solely in that, in a wide range of
action unconnected with the story, it establishes certain themes
which underlie the whole structure. This characteristic it shares
with the Greek epic although it is less concise. In the one theme
of the 'god cyning' and his heroic example to the group, Beowulf
is, again, not unlike the classical epic in purpose. However, the
other, the lament for the dead hero, in which the whole of Beowulf's
career is telescoped since the diminished vision at the beginning
expands into the full and powerful lament for Beowulf's own death
at the end of the tale; this second theme is elegiac rather than
epic. It is this theme which dominates the second half of the poem
so that this last adventure of Beowulf becomes almost an extended
funeral lament. This is seen in the elegiac "interludes" which all
occur in this half of the poem; in the picture of the brooding king
uneasy and restless in mind increasingly impeded by a doom which
emerges to challenge him with the release of the worm; and in the
retrospective tone of this half of the poem, which is devoted to
Beowulf's past, so that recollection is the main means of communi-
cating this adventure.

It would seem to me, therefore, that the opening to Beowulf
introduces an elegiac tone to the whole poem. B. J. Timmer argues
similarly when he identifies the elegiac mood in Old English poetry:
"The whole of Beowulf, for instance, is pervaded by an elegiac
spirit."[6] This elegiac structure can be seen in the reflective rather
than active tone, in the drag of the past away from present action,
and in the perspective to the poem given by the lament for the hero's
death.

Therefore, Old English literature presents the elegiac patterns
not only in the elegies themselves but also as the structure of the
epic. The reasons for this may well be the transitional conflicts
of Old English society and religion already referred to, which suggest
that the literature is not the product of a true heroic society as
much as of one emerging from this state. However, such problems of
the origin of the mood are of little help in solving the distinction
between the overtly epic poem Beowulf and the clearly elegiac songs.
That is, it now becomes necessary to distinguish between the heroic
passages of Beowulf and the elegiac patterns of the Wanderer's
song and also to show why the heroic passages prevent Beowulf from
becoming a true elegy.

The epic is the projection of a community through action. It
is a public consciousness which is muscular and direct and its
characteristic structure is narrative. The Old English epic never
fully sustains this consciousness as is apparent in its attitude
to the continuity of the group. It should be a sequence of

generations renewing and regenerating themselves despite their losses. Yet the Old English epic is continually perceiving these continuous generations as passing and lost in the midst of time, and halts to mourn the transience of its societies or heroes. Wherein lies the distinction between this retrospective epic song aware of transience and the elegies, except in brevity?

It is in the means of perceiving the elegiac condition that the difference between the elegiac-epic and the elegy can be found. The epic never achieves the mode necessary for observing the whole sequence of the group both in its existence and in its non-existence. This mode requires a detachment from this sequence, best met by an observer fully aware of the consequences of the presence and the absence of the group. This the epic cannot accomplish because of the nature of the epic material itself, its origin from within the group, its sense of the community, its dependence upon action as its true mode of perception. It is defeated also by the sense of continuity which is, in fact, given by the group, despite the intrusion of the limitations of transience, since the group does actually extend itself through Scyld to Hroðgar and Beowulf. Therefore, the elegiac perception remains only a pervasive mood in the epic allowing only an incoherent examination of the heroic society.

However, the detachment required for the elegiac mood is found by the singer of the elegies for here an individual who belonged to the group is parted from its existence. This mood is seen incipiently

in "The Ruin" where the theme of transience can be seen outside

the epic framework. In this poem a group is watched from afar

performing both its life and its death. This heroic crowd is seen

clearly in a dead city from an elegiac distance in "The Ruin"[7] a

poem that focuses upon the passing of human life. The city is

inhabited by the ghosts of the past generations that once lived in

this ruined town. The poem's grief comes from perceiving the last

days of this group "swylt eall fornom secgrofa wera;" (26) for

the hosts who might build again are dead "Betend crungon/ hergas

to hrusan" (28-29). The cast of this poem is the same group that

lives and riots in all the heroic poems, and is vividly imagined so

doing in this passage

> þær iu beorn monig
> glædmod ond goldberorht gleoma gefrætwed,
> wlonc ond wingal wighyrstum scan;
> seah on sinc, on sylfor, on searogimmas,
> on ead, on æht, on eorcanstan,
> on þas beorhtan burg bradan rices.   (32-37)

Indeed it is a group more recognisably Anglo-Saxon than the Roman

society that would actually have inhabited this city. Here are all

the conventional images of the group, the war-gear, the gold and

silver, the noise of the throng and the wine-pride. Although they

have passed long ago, in this poem they come vividly back to life.

The poem is objectively concerned with this traditional company

however for the observer does not take on an individual character but

is only a reporter. B. J. Timmer in his article on the elegiac mood

seems to draw a similar conclusion:

. . . in these poems there is always a question of the personal
relation of the poet or of the hero to the subject of the poem,
but in "The Ruin" at least in the fragment we have, this is not
the case.[8]

As Timmer suggests, such a "personal relation" to the subject

does occur in all the other elegies, and this, perhaps, is their

distinctive characteristic and that which most justifies the

description of them as lyrics. This personal relation allows the

observer to become as aware of himself as he is of his subject. It

is through such an awareness that the full examination of the group

can be made; not only from within its structure, as in the epic, or

in the epic memories of the elegy; but also from without. In such

a case the observer, whose personal existence is emerging, can use

that existence as a point of reference. By this sense of his own

existence he can also assess the meaning to himself of the group's

presence, and its absence. It is only when the observer is thus fully

developed as an individual that the conflicting conditions of

humanity that the elegy explores can be perceived. It is only when

the observer emerges fully as a being in his own right that a truly

elegiac relationship between observer and observed is created. It

is then that the existence of the group and of the observer can be

clearly seen. This presumes that the material natural to the Old

English elegy requires a balance between the impersonal, the observed,

and the personal, the observer, between objective and subjective.

It is at this point that the reporting of "The Ruin" becomes the

experience of "The Wanderer." In this experience both the confident

being of the epic and all the potential non-being that pervades

that confidence are met. And in the elegy the latter condition moves from the perimeter to the centre of the experience.

The relationship between the observer and what he has lost makes him more conscious of himself. He can see not only the group but also that identity of his own of which the group had made him so confident, become non-existent "swa heo no wære;" yet he still exists. He discovers that he is capable of being alone without losing his knowledge of what this solitude means to him. The effect of this is to define more clearly the relationship between the elegy and the lyric. The Old English elegies become lyrical in this conflict in the observer between a remembered and valuable existence and its loss, for it is such a tension in the experience of the man on his own that produces the lyrical mood. From such a conflict with his own existence, the individual is able to discover his own identity more fully, for it is measured by that which is in opposition to it.

One of the most basic oppositions to the self, to the private individuality, is the group. In the Old English elegy the conflict between these two conditions, the private and the public, is at crisis point. To be caught between full absorption in the group and full individuality is to be in a pivotal position. The exile, aware of the companionship and security he has lost represents his new individuality as loneliness, emptiness, darkness, cold, lovelessness, all words which the Anglo-Saxon associates with the most desperate terrors of existence. The communal life with which he can still identify is warm, swaggering and noisy, full of treasure

and warmed beds, of the company of the hall and lovers. The images the singer uses to reveal his conflict indicate his individuality in that they are derived so clearly from all that is relevant and important in his own experience. The personal life of the singer in the Old English elegies is made conscious through the tension, in the observer, between his actual loneliness and his feeling of belonging to the group, or with the women, to another person. It is this conflict facing the elegiac mood that makes it lyrical, for the opposition to his own individuality forces the singer to define that individuality, and his solitude deprives him of everything which might achieve that definition except his own experience.

In the Old English elegy, therefore, personal experience is discovered through the tension between opposing conditions. This opposition is based upon a peculiarly taut relationship between the public and the private man. Such a relationship is itself fundamental to the lyrical process for it prevents the lyric singer being completely submerged in the plural, the group or epic mood, and also ensures that he is not completely isolated in the singular "I." In the latter case, to which I hope to refer in detail when discussing the Middle English lyric, the lyrical mood is inhibited by the lack of a point of reference, or a focus, for the individuality which emerges. It seems that it is at the point of crisis in the tension between the two states, the "I" and the "We," that the singer must really speak for what he alone is, and that this is what the poets of the Old English elegies are trying to do.

I would argue, therefore, that the Old English elegy is an attempt to define the separated man, the individual alone; that is, to provide self-definition. The poet must make for himself the statement "I am now," doing so by using those few means really available to the individual for discovery of himself from his own experience. His song becomes an attempt at private definition to replace what he has known, using all that is left to him; his present moment and his memories, that is, his own knowledge of time; his emotional responses and his private opinions; and the world around him which he can perceive through his own senses and which can also represent his internal mood.

This is a subjectivity which seems to me essentially lyrical in its effort to make a passionate utterance of what Keats calls the "sole self."[9] Yet this subjectivity does, it seems to me, need the objective in order to become truly lyric. For the awareness of the self seems only to be brought vividly into being by reference to another condition in which that awareness may not be possible. Thus even Keats' "sole self" is discovered through opposition to other conditions, wine, poetry, death and timelessness, conditions which might absorb that self and relieve him of it.

I would claim therefore that the Old English elegies are the first extant expression of lyric experience within the native tradition and that they are an expression of such experience arising directly from involvement with the world of "Germania" and from recognition

of the vulnerability of that world. I would also argue that they
are such a primary assertion of this lyric experience that they serve
as a touchstone for later elaborations of the lyric mood, and
particularly for that which succeeds them in Middle English literature.

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW CULTURE

The effect of Christendom and the Romance culture can be seen in all the topics so far discussed, in the season, in time and place and also in the 'persona,' but the simplest and most fertile change occurs in the season which seems to control all the other themes.

The season of the lyric in the medieval world is Spring and this now takes the place of winter in English literature. This is the change to the 'pleasing seasons'[1] which Enkvist discussed in Seasons of the Year. The change can be traced to classical culture as Ernst Robert Curtius shows in European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages.[2] The original spring season is established in Greek and Roman authors and the dependence of medieval literature upon these models can be seen in their preservation and elaboration of this spring image, even to the point of such absurdities as mediterranean olives and tawny lions appearing on the Northern scene:

But what are we to say when a poet from Liège announces that spring has come: The olive, the vine, the palm, the cedar are in bud? Olive trees were extraordinarily abundant in the medieval North. They appear not only in Latin love poems of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries but also, by the hundreds, in the Old French epic. Whence do they come? From the rhetorical school exercises of late Antiquity.[3]

But the classical ancestors of these medieval descriptions are not only pervasive but profound in their influence.

Curtius traces this season back to Homer with whom begins "the Western transfiguration of the universe, the earth, the man"[4] for at this time all life "is pervaded by divine forces" and "Nature

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shares in the divine."[5] The Gardens of Alcinous, the goat island

near the land of Cyclops, the grotto of Calypso and an Ithacan

grotto sacred to the nymphs all appear in this springtime. These

spring gardens are "blessed shores" where "the pains of death are

unknown."[5] Thus Menelaus' promise of Elysium is of a place "at

the ends of the earth" where he will not die. By these 'gardens'

therefore, time is re-shaped because this is a "perpetual"[6] spring;

and place is re-defined because the season is elaborated into a

landscape. This Homeric spring is an ideal landscape which trans-

cends human time and also affirms the interrelation of time and

place. It is a prototype of later springs not only in its formation

but also in the needs it satisfies: "From Homer's landscape later

generations took certain motifs which become permanent elements in

a long chain of tradition. . . ." They take not only the charac-

teristics ". . . the lovely miniature landscape which combines

tree, spring, and grass; the wood with various species of trees; the

carpet of flowers." but also the spirit: ". . . the place of hearts'

desire, beautiful with perpetual spring, as the scene of a blessed

life after death; . . ."[7]

This springtime is also passed on by the pastoral tradition

in classical literature, which grows from the work of Theocritus of

Syracuse. In this tradition nature is inhabited by a small society,

of rural components, the shepherds whose leisure, pipe-playing and

connection with the Pan-god make them the most poetically 'realistic'

rural natives. This theme also "draws to itself the majority of

erotic motifs" for the shepherd is connected with love, perhaps through his association with Pan and primitive nature festivities. Thus through its expansive character which has both epic and lyric dimensions since it joins a "social microcosm" with the love motif, "Arcadia was forever being rediscovered" while "the Roman love elegy had a life span of but a few decades."[8] Thus, in classical literature, the spring season harbours also a setting for social and erotic idylls.

This "classical" season is elaborated by rhetorical rules so that it becomes formalised: "This heritage was twice subjected to conceptual schematization: in late antique rhetoric and in twelfth century dialectics."[9] As a result of the example of legal arguments, the material of a poem in late antiquity requires clearly defined proofs. These can be _argumenta a re_ (from things). This heading is subdivided into, among others, _argumenta a loco_ (from place) and _a tempore_ (from time), where? and when? The former investigates the setting under headings such as "by the sea or inland? cultivated? frequented? lonely?"[10] and the latter through the season and the time of day. By such a carefully argued structure the season is regulated and is made suitable to its setting. It is a setting which has already been prescribed by habit; it is the pastoral and the "blessed shores" of a "land of hearts' desire" both of which require a "perpetual spring."

Such proofs as are offered here are proofs of the senses and these proofs are given in more detailed, if less abstract or judicial

order, by the poets themselves as they build up the characteristics

of the setting; by poets such as Tiberianus in the Constantine

period and Libianus in the fourth century who claims:

Causes of delight are springs and plantations and gardens and soft
breezes and flowers and bird voices.[11]

Thus a structure is given to the external world, a structure which

is the background of the poem, or even becomes the poem itself. The

external world is now classified or organised as a scientist might

label his specimens or, as Curtius says: "The surging wealth of

sensual perceptions, then, is ordered by conceptual and formal means."[12]

This is passed on to the Middle Ages as a necessary characteristic

of style by the scholars of the twelfth century, such as Matthew of

Vendôme. 'Arts of Poetry' work upon the topics, or topoi, derived

from the classical world, particularising, elaborating and refining.

Dialects have taken over with what Curtius calls "grammatical permu-

tations:"

Thus we first have: "The bird twitters, the brook murmurs, the breeze
blows warm,"; next, "The birds give pleasure by their voices, the
brook by its murmuring, the breeze by its warmth," and so on.[13]

This wrestling with formal classification of classical topoi

is a characteristic of the Middle Ages. The original use of season

and landscape to project a mood or concept has given way to an

ordering of sensual perceptions which gives structure to the

external world. This leads, finally, to a preoccupation with

design, shape and organisation for themselves. By the twelfth

century the argument and the rhetoric are using the sensual world

for their own ends, ends which are concerned with the formative
rather than the responsive link with nature.

The spring season is thus derived from classical literature
and is given a formal structure. In epic poetry it is associated
with the Elysian fields and a blessed afterlife and in pastoral
poetry, with a rural idyll and a natural social world contrasted to
urban society. This time of delight is formed basically from a
sensual response to the natural world, but this response is ordered
and, eventually, formalised. Also, the setting of springtime is
the home of Natura, the source of love and fertility as well as
the organising principle of the universe. Although spring is not
necessarily used for erotic purposes in classical and late antique
literature, the sensual and natural aspects of the spring season
make the spring song particularly suitable to the theme of love.

Indeed the love theme, in its association with spring, has
already, and more suitably, been developed by the popular song. It
is supposed that in the popular, or 'folk', world, early agricultural
rituals, derived from the sight of the seeds, ploughed in winter,
breaking through the earth, gave spring a definite character as a
season of growth, of release from winter and a promise of summer.
This was accentuated by the activities of living creatures giving
birth to life at this season. From these "agricultural" times, [14]
as E. K. Chambers calls them in The Close of the Middle Ages, arose
the May festivals which, according to the critical tradition esta-
blished by Gaston Paris, were pagan observances using ring-dances

and accompanying song for their celebrations. These festivities
would then be associated with birth, and the atmosphere pervading
them would be one of release, of life and of personality, a release
in tune with the animal and vegetative world. Such festivities
moulded the popular spring song. The many images projected in
these spring festivals cohere into those of licence, and primarily
sexual licence, in keeping with the vivid physical character of the
season. From this licence develops the theme of love which joins
together in itself the images of mating, of physical contact, of
physical freedom rejecting winter sterility, and of summer ripeness
in growth and birth. These varying associations require a tone of
gaiety and hope in a forward, not backward, looking world.

Women are claimed to have taken a large part in these spring
songs and some medieval writers substantiate this. Thus in "Some
Aspects of Medieval Lyric" from Early English Lyrics E. K. Chambers
quotes Jacques de Vitry: "Sic mulier qui prima cantat, et coream
ducit"[15] and Greene in A Selection of English Carols from sixteenth
century Aberdeen Kirk Session Records:

Fourteen women were charged for 'plaing, dansin and singin off
fylthe carolles on Yeull Day, at evin, and on Sonday, at evin,..[16]

Chambers argues that women alone appear in connection with these
caroles, or ring-dances, in early documents. This would presumably
arise from the close connection of this season with mating and birth
and women's obvious relevance to these, which would make women the
true protagonists of spring love.

This popular physical love song allied itself with the classical spring in Latin lyrics of the period as the songs of the 'Carmina Burana' from the Benediktbeuern MS indicate. This liaison is perhaps made natural by the erotic undertone of the classical song which is, presumably, a refinement of the same ritual festivities in an earlier period, a Panic spring. The popular song also survives in the vernacular as the same MS proves. Indeed it must have survived as Raby claims in A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages:

The peoples of Europe did not live without song, and for thousands of years they had had their songs of love and of death. . . . The vernacular song was always there, whatever might happen to its learned counterpart.[17]

However, this popular spring love song is essentially pagan and is, therefore, opposed to the claims of the sacred in the Middle Ages. Eventually, therefore, it comes under the anathema of the Church during a period of what seems robustly open warfare for Greene tells of the Dancers of Kolbigk:

When the priest called us to stop dancing and come to the service, we refused, and the priest invoked the wrath of God through the influence of St. Magnus. The curse took effect, and we found that we could not break the circle or stop dancing for a whole year.[18]

The licentious song is therefore suppressed, or, as a further line of defence, is re-written as a sacred song, a task for which the Franciscans were particularly enthusiastic; as Chambers says, "turning song to the service of heaven."[19] Such are the compilers of the Kildare MS, the Bishop of Ossory, Friar James Ryman and Friar Thomas de Hales.

The latter's "Love Ron" is a valuable example of a further technique, one which essentially pervades the whole medieval approach to the licentious love theme. For, as Hales persuades a young women to a chastity that expresses love of Christ, he channels love away from its human object to a divine. Obviously licentious love cannot be eliminated altogether and the Church must continually curse, but Hales' re-direction of love frees it from licence and enables it to be used in the "service of heaven." But this "service" removes the love-song from the mating and birth of its origin. Therefore, during this process love is sublimated and assumes a new and spiritual character. However, both the erotic nature of the sensual awareness in classical literature and the uninhibited physical identification of the singer with the season of the popular song have ensured that the union of man and woman is a necessary aspect of springtime in the medieval world.

This union had not been necessary in the classical versions of spring, neither in the blessed season transcending time, nor in the idyllic life of a true community, of the pastoral. It is through these latter aspects of springtime, however, that the Christian influence truly pervades the medieval spring. It is from this line of descent that the 'pleasing seasons' from Enkvist's Seasons of the Year are derived. He argues that it is in their religious poetry that

the Anglo-Saxons first attempted to celebrate the actual, concrete delights of the pleasing seasons.

which take the reader to

more cheerful spheres of sunshine, pleasant weather, greenery
sweet scents and birdsong.[20]

While in Anglo-Saxon poetry the spring season in fact remains

fragmentary, largely isolated in the religious epic, it has conquered

the lyric by the Middle Ages, becoming the true background of medieval

art and literature. This is due to the full affirmation of Christianity

and of a Christian society in this period. For it is this season

which expresses the objective of the Christian world which is "to

transcend the bounds of time and place."[21]

Time and place are both represented in the spring season for

it is inseparable from its setting. The description of a spring

season is but a definition of a spring landscape. The medieval

spring derived from classical models is but one aspect of the general

topos of the locus amoenus or 'pleasant place.' This landscape is

the pastoral or Elysian fields, a 'blessed shore' set apart from

the everyday life of the community. It is not a realistic setting

and cannot be equated with that of the popular song which is

evoked with a brevity and bluntness natural to people of whom it

was so much a part. The perception of landscape in the popular song

is, in addition, largely an emotional rendering of the meaning of

spring to human nature. Thus the landscape is projected as the

ebb and flow of human life and is subordinated to this responsive

relationship. Such a setting is far removed from the highly intel-

lectual perception of the spring season which is characteristic

of the Middle Ages.

In the locus amoenus, both classical and medieval, the natural
world takes on a distinct shape. It emerges with a clarity and
precision that are remarkable; but it is the clarity and precision
of a dream, highly coloured, motionless, without roughness, and of
astonishing purity of outline. This world is the pastoral ideal
inhabited by knights ambling at leisure through always sunny,
flowered fields, and shepherdesses with smooth hands, gentle manners,
and, it would seem, no work to do. This landscape serves no
practical purpose and is only recognisable to those at leisure, or
occasionally visiting, who can appreciate the natural world at the
height of its beauties. In this sense the locus amoenus is given
form by selective and accentuated memories. The selection chooses
that which is most pleasant and alluring in the landscape, and
serves, it would seem, not the practical needs of experience but
the psychological needs of the "land of hearts' desire." That is,
as a dream it fulfils a wish in the heart or mind of the dreamer.
By the intensification of one aspect of the natural world it
gratifies that which the dreamer has not experienced, or experiences
only fragmentarily, in waking life. In this sense the locus amoenus
is that 'pleasant place' which does not exist (for long) in reality.
Its function is the reverse of realism. It is to give existence to
that which is not real, to make concrete and permanent an ideal, and,
therefore, the locus amoenus is more than the 'pleasant place.'
It is the ideal landscape which Curtius calls it.

Nor is it only ideal in that it is in opposition to
the physical experience of the natural world. It is also ideal in
that it transcends the physical facts of existence altogether as is
foreseen in its origin in the Elysian fields afterworld of Homer
which escapes the pains of death. In the <u>locus amoenus</u> the dreamer
need no longer inhabit the real world subordinate to its demands.
By creating an ideal landscape he can dwell in an unchanging world
of perpetual joy, fresh, green and ever young. Thus he also
denies that grip that time and place have on man. He need not be
subject to the change and passing of seasons nor the decay of the
physical organism which these demand, nor to the physical importunites
of place, of the rigours and disappointments which intersperse the
fair fields. Thus springtime becomes the truly Christian season of
a pleasing eternity and the <u>locus amoenus</u> becomes Paradise.

But the creation of this landscape in order to transcend the
bounds of time and place does require "sophistication," as Enkvist
argues. These Christian seasons are not so much physical realities
as projections of psychological needs upon the natural world. The
realisation of this psychological ideal means the accommodation of
symbolic content, a need which requires abstraction and intellectual
clarity. The medieval springtime, therefore, accentuates the trend
to formalization. The discovery of the ideal character of the natural
object tends to make of it a symbol thereby making it a 'general'
or essence, rather than a 'particular.' The effort is always to give
to the object, be it of landscape or season, a clear and permanent

form. This is the medieval version of the more realistic ordering
of the sense perceptions of late Antiquity. It is the rationalising
of the sensual into a psychological shape. Thus the lily becomes
the stiff and static flower of the medieval tapestry, or the pure
design of the _fleur de lys_. Spring and its landscape, thus
formalised, become available for further abstraction. The lily of
the natural world which becomes the design of the 'abstracted' flower,
finally becomes the lily of the five leaves symbolising the five
virtues of the Christian. Thus it is that the pleasing Christian
seasons lead along "unfamiliar paths" of intellectual sophistication
and formality in the medieval world, to a spiritual, or psychological,
identity which escapes the "bounds of time and place."

Thus the spring season yields the two major themes of the
Romance and Christian culture of the Middle Ages, the themes of love
and of the spiritual life. They dominate the medieval lyric in
lovesong in the style of the troubadours, and in the religious song.
Nor, because the Romance and Christian aspects of medieval culture
are interdependent, are love and the spirit clearly separated. The
season is also interchangeable, in its secular role relating to
human union, while, as an ideal, it defines the spiritual world. The
season also depicts the blending of these two worlds in that it is
the setting of the theme of love. Love now belongs not only to the
physical world but also to the spiritual and this flexibility becomes
invaluable. Love, which was the obvious theme for the secular poem,
can now be used to convey the relationship with the divinity. Yet

this spiritual love itself defines the secular version of the

troubadour, separating it from the licentious aspects of the

popular song. In turn spiritual love gains the physical such as

the union with the divine of the mystic of St. Bernard of Clairvaux:

Truly spiritual and a contract of holy matrimony is a relation such
as this. It is less than understatement to call it a contract.
It is an embrace (amplexus) - an embrace surely, where to will and
not to will the same thing makes one spirit out of two. . . . When
love comes into the soul it changes everything else into itself and
takes the affections captive. The soul therefore that loves, loves,
and knows nothing else. . . .[22]

or from the school of the English mystic Richard Rolle, as Christ

addresses the soul:

> Lo! lemman swete, nou may þou se,
> þat I haue lost my lyf for þe.
> Christ pleads with his Sweet Leomman[23]

or as the human turns to Christ

> Me langes lede me to þi lyght, & festen in þe al my thoght;
> In þi swetnes fyll my hert, my wa make wane till noght. [24]
> A Song of Love-Longing to Jesus

In all three examples, the love that defines a spiritual condition

is recognisably derived from a secular experience. It has a flexi-

bility that leads to the ambiguity of the following verse from Rolle's

school:

> Lufe es thoght wyth grete desyre, of a fayre louyng
> Lufe I lyken til a fyre, þat sloken may na thyng
> Lufe vs clenses of oure syn, lufe vs bote sall bryng
> Lufe þe keynges hert may wyn, lufe of ioy may syng[25]
> A Song of the Love of Jesus

The interchangeability of spiritual and secular love is seen

most clearly in the 'persona' of the poems. The theme of love still

needs the female, or perhaps more correctly, in this context, the

feminine, for the woman becomes a 'lady.' This lady is both human and divine; nor is it certain who preceded whom in the medieval format, whether the human beloved or the Virgin Mary was first adored. Both secular lady and spiritual virgin acquire each other's attributes. The Mother of God becomes the beloved of the pious singer in a shape like that of the living lady, while the human beloved inherits a holiness, a spiritual content, becoming the always unattainable lady of the troubadour and the _stilnovist_. Both take on the characteristics of the spring season and landscape in which they are set. They are defined as clearly and precisely and are steadily formalised into the stiff and motionless postures of the medieval design. In addition the light, freshness and purity of this new season endow them with perpetual joy, youth and clarity. These ladies are also "hearts' desire." In this interchange of secular and sacred love lies the true fusion of the Romance and Christian culture, which is fully realised in the beloved lady with one face turned to the human and the other to the divine.

The emergence of this lady also indicates a new relationship between the singer and his song. The singer is no longer voicing himself as in the character of a woman, that is, as a 'persona.' He is speaking for himself directly addressing the woman as recipient of his love. The woman becomes the subject, or song, exclusively; and she is used thus to define and characterise experience rather than to express it. Thus there is a new projection in the love song, a secondary 'persona,' separated from the singer, taking feminine form

in opposition to the male and, ultimately becoming abstract, or divine. The male poet turns himself to the work of analysis of this projection so that she becomes, as it were, his 'environment' as this word would be understood by McLuhan.

Yet it is in the lady's setting that the true nature of the song about her is revealed, either in the spring season of the secular lyric, or in the Paradise of the religious song. For in these lie the change in time from the little life of man to eternity, and in place, from this world to the next.

CHAPTER VII

THE ARGUMENT

During a long period from approximately 1000 to 1300 the poetry of England is confused and fragmentary in both style and extant survivals. The first of these centuries covers the decay of the Old English heroic and elegiac style. Most critics seem happy to close this tradition with "The Battle of Maldon" written about 991. After this period a potential, if slight, trend towards a more Continental tradition can be detected, even before the Conquest, in works such as the eleventh century translation of "Appollonius of Tyre." After the Conquest the situation is confused by the replacement of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy by the Norman, which latter was French speaking.

This period is covered thoroughly in studies such as Wilson's Lost Literature of Medieval England[1] and Early Middle English Literature[2] and M. Dominica Legge's Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background.[3] The latter discusses the problem of language and its effects upon literature. He argues that French (or Anglo-Norman) was a foreign language used at the courts. Below the royal and magnate level even the invaders might be presumed to have been bilingual and, for the lower classes, English would have been the common, and probably only, language. Wilson concludes that for a large part of the population English would have been the natural language although bilingualism and even a knowledge of the three languages of French, Latin and English was not uncommon. It is necessary to keep in mind this English-speaking core, deepening

steadily towards the base of the society in the lower classes, the classes who controlled what is called the 'popular' tradition. This language structure has some effects on the literature of this period and on its sequel in the thirteenth century.

The actual changes in literature were effected, it would seem from the arguments presented, in the aristocratic level of society. Here the Anglo-Saxon nobility had gradually been removed. Therefore, the written records of heroic or elegiac poetry were no longer required since the class for whom they were written down were eliminated. Meanwhile in Anglo-Norman Literature M. Dominica Legge defines a growing Anglo-Norman literature which also included lyric:

> There was . . . an Anglo-Norman lyric, but no collection of it was ever made at the time, and in consequence its remains are both scanty and scattered. . . .[4]

This lack of collection is a problem for the lyric in England in all languages during this period. Nevertheless, the examples given in Legge's study clearly suggest that this Anglo-Norman lyric has a sense of the courtly style, as in the following example:

> En un verger m'entrai que mult fu replenye
> De flurs e de oysels que fesoient melodie;
> E joe mournes alay pensant de may amye,
> Si luy ateindroie a nul jour de ma vie.
> (Cotton Caligula A.xviii)[5]

These poems cannot be claimed as Anglo-Norman with any assurance; yet there is some evidence that, in the hierarchical manner characteristic of this and later centuries, a lyric style is being transmitted to English literature. It is derived from the court through its contacts with Northern France, which had derived the style initially from Provence.

However, it seems to be only with the establishment of the Angevin
courts in the mid-twelfth century that the Continental style reaches
the English language. It is in the post-Norman period in the
thirteenth century that the fully-fledged Middle English lyric
emerges.

Meanwhile through this Anglo-Norman period there exists the
popular tradition. In this tradition, Wilson claims, the perhaps
already unfashionable heroic and elegiac themes may survive. Certainly
the alliterative style must have survived in this way as is proved
by its persistence and the alliterative revival of the fourteenth
century. Thus, in both style and theme, any purely Anglo-Saxon
tradition was dependent, in default of the literate aristocracy,
upon the popular oral tradition.

In common with many critics Wilson, when discussing the English
lyric tradition, points to a popular tradition, of the ring-dance
which was finally recorded as the fourteenth and fifteenth century
'carole.' He suggests that when these songs are first referred to
as in De Gesta Herewardi Saxoni and the Liber Eliensis,[6] they seem
already to have a long history. Nevertheless, he doubts an Old
English tradition and attributes most encouragement of even this
popular style to the French influence. He, also, claims that the
emergence of the literary lyric style of Middle English, with its
surprising maturity, is due to the importation of a French tradition.

Thus within this intervening period where the change in styles
took place, there is some material, if fragmentary, upon which to

construct theories but little real evidence as to what actually took place. The only reliable trend can be seen in the difference between the English and Anglo-Norman fragments. In the latter a close relation to the Northern French can be argued, while the English fragments seem more popular.

It does not seem to me that further discussion of this period is of great value since it is largely a period of readjustment of both English and Anglo-Norman to new conditions. Anglo-Norman adapts itself to its homeland which makes it a more independent, and perhaps more provincial, variant of its origin. English, meanwhile, adapts itself to the growing influence of the French style. It is an adaptation probably initiated before the Conquest and due as much to the supremacy of French culture as to the Conquest itself which simply makes that culture more accessible. Nevertheless, to deal with this latter adaptation it is necessary to recognise that survival of the English language mentioned earlier, and the need of literary expression in that language. For it is this that requires a vernacular rendering of the French themes. The result is the emergence in the thirteenth century of a French influenced lyric written in Middle English. Wilson's suggestions as to the use of the English language during this period can alone be used to deduce the audience for this lyric. It may be presumed that this audience was not the royal and magnate class, although this is simply to exclude a small proportion of the population. It might also be argued, but with less security, that such an audience was

not found in the lower class. No more than these negative conclusions
can really be provided from the evidence I have so far seen.

In the absence of a real literature during this period of
adjustment, it has seemed to me most constructive to turn to the
thirteenth century and the fully-fledged Middle English lyric. It
is this lyric style, mature although unskilled in comparison with
its Continental predecessors and contemporaries, that I wish to
discuss. For it is this first product of the 'medieval' tradition
in the English lyric which I wish to relate to the Old English
style discussed in the first half of this thesis. It is in assessing
these two matured verse styles that lie on either side of the
transitional 'gap,' that I believe a just comparison of the lyrics
produced by the Old and the Middle English cultures can be made.
Meanwhile this brief introductory discussion will have characterised
the new medieval style in the only way I consider possible, as
aristocratic and French in origin although produced for an English-
speaking audience.

I have not considered it necessary to carry the study of the
Middle English lyric into any period later than the thirteenth
century since this is the first literature emerging after the 'break-
down' and is therefore the subject of this study. I would claim,
however, that the later Middle English lyric develops logically
from these earlier roots although influenced by a second 'Chaucerian'
era of importation from France. Nevertheless the later English lyric
tends only to establish, elaborate, and, perhaps diffuse, the trends

perceptible in the thirteenth century lyrics. I have, therefore, concentrated on two collections of these latter, the Oxford volume English lyrics of the Thirteenth Century[7] and Brook's edition, The Harley Lyrics[8] from Harley MS 2253. I will, on the whole, discuss only representative poems although I will indicate, when doing so, other poems showing similar characteristics.

One added advantage of this limitation to the thirteenth century is the greater opportunity this period offers of distinguishing between the Old and Middle English treatments of the same theme. It is such a study I intend to pursue in the ensuing chapter. The themes I wish to discuss are those that occurred in Old English poetry, the woman, the season, and time. Society, so large an influence on Old English literature I wish to leave to a later chapter since here the systematising, or perhaps intellectualising, of the social structure seems to afford some clue as to the change in lyric style. Nevertheless this systematising can also, I believe, be perceived in the themes discussed in this chapter, and in a simpler form which will lay a groundwork for the later study.

In discussing the change in treatment of the Old English themes of season, woman and time, I have chosen poems which seem to me to involve themselves, deliberately or not, with the earlier approach to these themes. That is, I would describe the Old English female figure as the 'woman' and the Middle English as the 'lady'; the Old English season as winter and the Middle English as spring; and time in the Old English poem as empirical whereas in

Middle English time is set in a new context of eternity. Each of the poems I have chosen, however, illustrates both concepts. The intention of my discussion is to show how the encounter between the old and new themes is handled.

Of the songs in Harley MS 2253 six of the best-known are devoted to the lady beloved by the respective poets. She is a charming creature. Yet she is the same creature throughout. Despite the almost naïve sincerity communicated by "Annot and John" (Harley, 3), "Alysoun" (Harley, 4), "Wiþ longyng y am lad" (Harley, 5), "The Fair Maid of Ribblesdale" (Harley, 7), "A Wayle Whyt ase Whalles Bon" (Harley, 9), and "Blow, Northerne Wind" (Harley, 14), it seems as if all the poets are in love with the same lady. The basic description is laid down most concisely in "Alysoun":

> On heu hire her is fayr ynoh,
> hire browe broune, hire eʒe blake;
> wiþ lossum chere he on me loh
> wiþ middel smal ant wel ymake.
>
> (Harley, 4, 13-16)

and "hire swyre whittore þen þe swon." These lines are expanded to the six verses of "The Fair Maid of Ribblesdale" and to the first half of "Blow, Northerne Wind," but the added details of brows, nose, forehead, locks, breasts, sides and fingers, "þeʒes, legges, fet ant al," merely fill in the outline laid down in "Alysoun." The basic principle is that this lady "ywraht wes of þe beste." In "A Wale Whyt ase Whalles Bon" this becomes "A wyf nis non so worly wroht;", in "The Fair Maid of Ribblesdale":

> founde were þe feyrest on
> þat euer wes mad of blod ant bon,
>
> > (Harley, 7, 4-5)

in "Wīþ longyng": "burde on of þe best."

The physical characteristics so lovingly, if perhaps cumber-
somely, described in these poems obey certain other rules perhaps
made clearest in "Annot and John". There Annot is described as
sweet and gay: "hire nome is in a note of a nyhtegale," "such sucre
mon secheþ þat saneþ men sone;". In "Alysoun" this becomes the
delightful girl that "on me loh." In "Blow, Northerne Wind" it is
expressed more morally:

> Heo is dereworþe in day,
> graciouse, stout, ant gay,
> gentil, iolyf so þe iay,
> > (Harley, 14, 39-41)

But all these poems would agree that "so feyr heo is ant fyn."
Again in "Annot and John" the fairness is characterised

> Hire rode is ase rose þat red is on rys;
> wiþ lilye-white leres lossum he is;
> > (Harley, 3, 11-12)

These comparisons are used frequently. They describe a likeness to
spring flowers, stressing tenderness and delicacy. There is an even
greater tendency to emphasise whiteness, which implies both purity
and freshness. These aspects are further elaborated in the lady's
likeness to the new spring day. The characteristic of the poem's
day is that the sun shines and makes the world bright. So the beloved
is repeatedly the "burde in a boure ase beryl so bryht" introduced
in "Annot and John." She is "bryhtest vnder bys" in "Wīþ longyng"

and "Ase sonnebeam hire bleo ys briht" in "The Fair Maid" while

in "Blow, Northerne Wind" she is again "þat brid so breme in boure."

Socially the beloved of these poets has two characteristics.

First she is a lady. She is so entitled not only by her fineness

but also by her setting. She is always the "burde in boure" as

already quoted from "Annot and John" and as, again, in "Blow,

Northerne Wind"

> Ichot a burde in boure bryht
> þat sully semly is on syht,
> menskful maiden of might,
> > (Harley, 14, 5-7)

In "The Fair Maid" she is "in boure best wiþ bolde." As a result she

is frequently apostrophised as 'Leuedi' for, as "Advice to Women"

says, these are "ledies þat beþ bryht in bour."

The beloved is also described as a maid: "a maide marreþ

me" (Wiþ longyng" etc., 1.3) and "menskful maiden" ("Blow, Northerne

Wind," 6). This is the second social characteristic. This maiden

is lovable certainly and the Middle English poems indicate this

with grace and, sometimes, considering the otherwise respectful tone,

with audacity. The graceful tribute can be seen in lines such as:

> Heo haþ a mury mouht to mele,
> wiþ lefly rede lippes lele,
> romany forte rede;
> > (Harley, 7, 37-38)

and "eyþer side soft ase silk,/ whittore þen þe moren-mylk," (The

Fair Maid). The desire is more open in "A Wayle Whyt ase Whalles

Bon:"

> Ich wolde ich were a þrestelcok,
> a bountyng oþer a lauercok,
> swete bryd!
> Bituene hire curtel ant hire smok
> y wolde ben hyd.
>> (Harley, 9, 51-55)

This openness is due perhaps to the fact that this poem alone might imply adultery: "A wyf nis non so worly wroht;/ When heo ys blyþe to bedde ybroht," (Harley, 9, 13-14). For none of the other maids have been so brought to bed, as "Alysoun" and "Wiþ longyng" make clear. Though "heuene y tolde al his/ þat o nyht were hire gest" (Wiþ longyng, 38-40) and though "longe to lyuen ichulle forsake" (4.20):

> Bote he me wolle to hire take
> forte buen hire owen make
>> (Harley, 4, 18-19)

the subjective mood, 'were' and "Bote he me wolle" indicate clearly that she has not yet been so loved. The beloved can therefore be characterised as the unwedded girl of some social standing adored for her slenderness and youth, her laughter, sweetness and brightness.

All these conditions suggest that the man's pleas are restrained. He 'courts' rather than "wowes." This restraint is most noticeable, however, in the relationship between man and woman expressed by the format of the song. This maiden lady does not speak herself. (The only occasion when this occurs is in the courtly pastourelle "De Clerico et Puella"). Indeed speech in these poems is devoted to the man's emotions. Nor does she have a character, a personality, of her own. The poem is more preoccupied with the lover's description of his own mood. This seems to be an attempt to characterise

himself, a theme which is also subject to 'rules'. Meanwhile
the maid is described solely by her outer garment, as it were.
This garment is made up of her physical attributes and those social
and moral graces these attributes imply. And, throughout, this
description is made from a distance. This distance is effective
not only socially but also emotionally. As a result the lady has
become an image, albeit charming and offering a hope of reality.
This image of the maiden-lady is like the tender gaiety of the new
spring day.

The Virgin Mary is allied with the beloved lady not so much
in the physical attributes as in the graces these imply. The
images used to present the maiden's spring freshness can also be
seen in the description of the Virgin Mary. She shares the
brightness, "so feir ant brist," "bristore þan þe dai-is list",
"Of One That is so Fair and Bright" (Oxford, 17). Similar references
are made in "The Five Blisses" (Oxford, 41), "A Prayer of Penitence
to Our Lady" (Oxford, 32) and in "A Prayer to the Mother of Mildness"
(Oxford, 55). She is not only Mother of God but also maiden, the
"mayden" of "A Prayer of the Five Joys" (Oxford, 18) or as in "I
Sing of One That is Matchless" (Oxford, 31)

> Mayden heo was uid childe & Maiden her biforen,
> & maiden ar sot-hent hire chid was iboren;

She is, in this purity, likened to flowers, "lilie of chastete"

"Gaude Virgo Mater Christi" (Oxford, 22) and:

> Lauedi, flur of parradis, –
> Nas neuir non so scene –
> (Oxford, 24, 91-2)

from "A Light is Come to the World." This spring purity can also

be seen in "A Prayer to the Mother of Mildness" (Oxford, 55) and

in "A Song to the Queen of Heaven" (Oxford, 60) "Spronge blostme

of one rote." The brightness of Mary reveals the same moral graces.

She is also sweet, with "suete eyen," and honourable "þu ard god

& suete & brit" from "Look on me with the Sweet Eyes" (Oxford, 27).

These characteristics are compounded into the image of the beloved

in "Mother Mild Flower of All":

> Moder milde, flur of alle,
> þu ert leuedi sþuþe treoþe,
> bricht in bure & eke in halle,
> þi loue is euer iliche neoþe.
> (Oxford, 61, 1-4)

The characteristics Our Lady has taken from the beloved are

the flowers and the light of the spring day, those graces inherent

in the beloved's physical attributes. These will attract the

religious poet's love to Mary as they do the secular poet's love

to his lady. In addition Mary is firmly the "lauedi" as is stressed

continually in the title given to her, "Ure Lefdi." Yet this

title is again compounded with that of maiden, "Virgo," as the

beloved's has also been. Finally, in the spiritual realm the

Virgin Mary inhabits, the beloved's characteristics take on a new

meaning. Mary is "flur of parradis" and her graces belong to

heaven, and will save the poet. That is, here his loving mood, his

pleas and self-analysis, define the human being whom the lady is to

save.

Both lady and Virgin are, in fact, primarily related to the poet's love for them. They are not only the goal of that love but also the means of defining its character. They are almost used as pictures of the mood that has 'lighted' upon the poet. He is attempting to understand that mood by describing these 'pictures' and his relationship with them. Thus neither the lady nor the Virgin are given individual identities. Instead they become a kind of medium, or, in medieval terms, a mediator. They represent a process, that of loving.

In this attempt to understand relationship as love the similarity between Mary and the beloved is almost obligatory. In the medieval Christian world love is not only an emotional relationship between people but also a spiritual relationship, ultimately the love of God. The two 'ladies' represent these two aspects of love. The beloved is the expression of the love found in the natural world; Mary, the expression of the spiritual aspects of love.

The lady who is to save the poet is the unattained maiden. When applied to Mary this leads to one of the most interesting themes of the Middle Ages the "maiden-mother" of God. This is a paradox that continually delights the Middle English poet. Yet he does not fail to recognise its contradictions. It is this latter recognition which provides the first of the encounters between Middle and Old English themes. For in the maiden-mother the medieval beloved meets the 'woman' who was the female figure of the earlier culture.

In the Old English culture the woman is lover, wife, and mother of a new generation as is shown in Wealhþeow and the women of the digressions in <u>Beowulf</u> as well as in the characters of the two women's elegies. This means an emphasis on the body and leads to the development of a character and one who speaks for herself. That is, the woman is more particular and personal than the lady. She is less of an image or a type. She is assertively engaged with the human being, in the time of this world, and through the multiplicity of physical and sensual experience. Her life is the dynamics of the popular spring and licence, but she remains essentially the woman who has appeared in Old English poetry although there, without the spring background.

The difference between these two concepts of the feminine can be brought out by accepting the contact between them as a struggle, that is by opposing the lady to the woman. This is the method adopted by three poems among the thirteenth century lyrics, "Our Lady Sorrows for her Son" (<u>Oxford</u>, 47), "Jesus Sorrows for his Mother" (<u>Oxford</u>, 45) and "Stod ho þere neh" (<u>Oxford</u>, 4). Significantly, in each of these poems the 'lady' is presented in her most idealised form as the Virgin Mary, presumably because Mary is furthest removed from the natural 'woman' since she is the 'spiritual' version of the 'lady'.

The 'struggle' is presented through the paradox of the maiden-mother. This paradox is seen most clearly in "Stod ho þere neh." Here the 'lady' is the virginal mother Mary; she whose

"bearnes buirde" was "blisful" (7) exactly because "childing‑pine
haues te non picht" (12). This is in direct opposition to the
experience of the human mother. But it is in this "blisful"
conception that the struggle is focussed. For the virgin mother
must learn "wmmone wo, þat barnes bere" (14) so that she can "wep"
(10). Thus the duality of womanhood is presented in the bearing
of children; and not only in the subjection to generation, but also
to the suffering that generation entails. The lady-virgin who is
not engaged in this "wmmone wo" is thus by the argument of this
poem, so far, engaged in conflict with the 'woman,' although the
issue is as yet unresolved.

The poem's argument has fully characterised these two womanly
conditions in the words "wo" and "blisful." The struggle becomes
more intense as the virgin mother learns the woe of the womanly
role. The fulfilment of the living woman has been condensed into
this image of human suffering. To have avoided it has given the
Mary her initial bliss. Yet she must learn this "wo" because she
must learn to "wep"; and this suffering, it is implied, will make
her woman, for women suffer with childbearing. Yet this "wo", and
the theme of generation associated with it in this poem are but
aspects of the natural world, which is physical and sensual. "Wo"
is, therefore, but another aspect of humanity. But there is yet a
further aspect which characterises human beings and that is mortality.
Up to this point in the poem the Virgin Mother is involved not only
with woman's work but with her human nature and all the suffering that

entails owing to its physical being. That other property of man's

physical nature, mortality, is now used to attempt a resolution.

For the Virgin learns "wmmone wo" through the death of her

Son on the Cross. It is the Crucifixion which makes a human mother

of Mary.

> For in his dead þe wo þu ʒulde
> In childing þat tu þole schulde
> þurd modres kuindeliche lahes. (16-18)

Thus Mary appears here in an involvement with death and suffering

which have compelled her into her female, mortal, human condition.

Such an image parallels that of Christ himself and this strikes

at the heart of the Christian message. The figure who "loch" (10),

through whose "blisful bearnes buirde" (7) "wrong w(e)s wroht to

wmmone wirde" (8), this figure must accept its full humanity. It

is from this humanity that she should be reborn "brochte" to

"blisse" (80) through the "uprisinge" (31) of her son which was

"selli liik to his birdinge" (32). Thus the reconciliation of the

two kinds of womanhood would be the ultimate Christian message of the

maiden's assumption of humanity, mortality and suffering. In this

'woman's' struggle this means subordination to the trials, both

emotional and physical, of generation.

However, to conclude at this point would be to misread the

poem and to complete it with the Crucifixion and Resurrection stanzas.

But the resolution of the struggle does not lie in the need of the

Virgin to pay her due to her kind. When the womanly figure is cele-

brated in the sixth verse it is indeed as mother and as transformed

from laughing virginity to a physical embodiment of maternity.

But in this embodiment lies a difference which sets the tone for

the remainder of the poem:

> For, so gleam glidis þurt þe glas,
> Of þi bodi born he was,
> And þurt þe hoale þurch he gload. (34-36)

While physically envisaging the mother, this image does not include

the pains of labour. On the contrary all human stress has been

converted into the words "glidis" "gload" so that this image of

reminds only of that "blisful bearnes buirdinge." And the second

birth is very like the first as Christ moves without strain to

paradise, his natural home. The Virgin Mother has herself been

returned to the immaculate mother of the poem's opening. This

immaculate condition is stressed in that these brief lines contain

one of the most intense early Middle English visualisations of the

divine light contained within the human form. This light condensed

within the human frame irradiates the mother making of her again that

purity that is the maiden-lady.

In this lies the resolution, not in that the Virgin mother is

made human and mortal but in that she transforms the image of woman,

labouring, weeping and mortal, into a divine purity. Thus womankind,

even of this physical level, is raised to that figure who can

> bring us out of wa,
> Of sinne, of sorhe, of sich alswa
> to bliss(e) þat his endeles. (40-42)

The true reconciliation of this poem is not the subordination

of lady to woman but the release of the lady from womanhood. That is,

the focus is not upon life, its generation and mortality, but upon

the freedom from it that the Crucifixion and Resurrection have

brought. This freedom is won by the re-affirmation of the lady after

the suffering sequence. This re-affirmation is that she can "bring

us out of wa," her purpose being to bring us "to blisse þat is

endeles." Thereby the focus of the poem is shifted back to that

laughing blissful state she bore with her at the beginning.

The integration of the two women in the 'Crucifixion'

argument is, therefore, undone with the poet's plea at the end of

the poem. In this a virginal image acts as a magical formula

transforming Cross into Heaven and woman into unblemished lady.

These patterns can also be seen in the intervention of the virgin

in the Crucifixion section of "A light is come to the world" (Oxford,

24, 91-95). The virginal image with the mother shed is seen in

Oxford, 27, "Look on me with thy Sweet Eyes" while the virginal mother

appears in "I Sing of One that is Matchless" (Oxford, 31). The

association of the virginal image with heaven is seen "The Five Blisses"

(Oxford, 41). The protective virginal mother appears in "Gabriel's

Greeting to Our Lady" (Oxford, 44) and in "A Song to the Queen of

Heaven" (Oxford, 60), in "Mater Salutaris" (Oxford, 16) and in "Of

One that is so Fair and Bright" (Oxford, 17). Rather than a full

identification with the regenerating experience the Virgin has

been relieved of it, and this relief typifies her protective inter-

vention. Her magic has released from pain and dispelled woe

exactly as the poet of "God Ureisun" is to pray she would. It might

be argued that the same pattern is followed with Christ in poems

such as Oxford, 50, "Suete Ihesu King of Blisse" and 54 "A

Springtide Song of the Redemption." However the more usual

pattern in Christ poems is grief for the Crucifixion, and they

tend not to move beyond this pattern as in the poems from the Oxford

text, 34, 49, 63, 64, 69 and 84.

Winter versus Spring

The argument between the physical and spiritual worlds is

not only conducted through the opposition of the lady to her

antithesis in the woman but also through the antithesis of spring

in winter. This relationship is crucial for the distinction between

Continental and Anglo-Saxon content. It is also an issue of which

the poets themselves seem aware. In at least one poem "The God

Ureisun of Ure Lefdi" the subject seems to come to the surface as

an explicit struggle, as an argument. A long paragraph in this

poem is devoted to a logical debate, in poetic terms, between the

two seasons. Such a debate is apparent also in the bird narratives

The Owl and the Nightingale[9] and "The Thrush and the Nightingale,"

where the owl and the thrush oppose the spring nightingale with

wintry characteristics, but in the "God Ureisun" the issues presented

are significant and also condensed with the following brief passage:

> Alle þine ureondes þu makest riche kinges,
> þu ham ʒiuest kinescond, beies & gold ringes;
> þu ʒiuest eche reste ful of sþete blisse
> þer ðe neure deað ne come, ne herm ne sorinesse
> þer bloþeð inne blisse blostmen hþite & iureden,
> þer ne mei non ualeþen, uor þer is eche sumer,
> ne non liuiinde þing þoc þer nis ne ʒeomer
>
> (ll.33-40)

Ne beoþ heo neuer i-dreaued mid þinde ne mid reine;
Mied ham is ever more dei þið-ute nihte,
Song þið-ute seoruþe & sib þið-ute nihte;
Mid ham is muruhðe moniuold þið-ute teone & treie,
Gleo-beames & gome inouh, liues þil & eche pleie.
                                        (1.58-60)

The struggle is here presented in formal, if simple, dialectical terms, in alternate lines. Thus the two seasons conduct a duel, the end of which is foreseen in the opening lines of another poem "The Spring Song of the Redemption": "Spring is come and winter gon." This is the desired resolution.

The seasonal accompaniments of "snou" and "vorst," "wind" and "reine" are used to evoke the deeper associations of winter, that "winter wo" that the birds shake off in "Lenten ys come." Here there appear the words "herm," "sorinesse," "geomore," "idreaued." The spring opposed to it is designed from the conventional medieval formula "blostme" "hwite and rede," daylight, "blisse" with "miruhðe manifold." Deeper than this lies a temporal distinction for this is an "eche sumer" where the flowers will never fall. In opposition to this eternal spring is not only night but also death, for, in the spring heaven "þer ðe neuere deað ne come."

The whole passage is as much an elucidation of the premiss that winter is "gon" as that spring is come. This is effected by the use of negatives which themselves dismiss winter. Thus the absence of elimination of winter, which is necessary to the arrival of spring, is effected by rejection. The rejection formulated by the negatives is intended to affirm the positive; that which is

present: spring. However the proclamation of spring by this means

defeats its own purpose, for the negative pattern perpetuates the

wintry absence insistently, making it a presence.

The struggle is also, though less assertively, cultural. The

passage seems subtly to recapitulate the whole canon of elegiac poems

which emerge during the breakdown of the Old English epic world.

Not only is the season of the elegy evoked and with it the "wo" it is

presumed to project, but this winter season is also created with a

background recognisably Anglo-Saxon, of kingship, of kin, friends,

of rings and bracelets. The subtlety of the evocation lies in a

seemingly deliberate use of Anglo-Saxon poetic formulæ. These

formulæ are becoming steadily less natural to the new language that

is evolving. There are in this passage not only words such as "freond,"

"gold ringes," "snou," "vorst," "vihte," which belong to both

languages, although carrying a different weight in the earlier

culture, but also words such as "beies," "geomor," "i-dreaved,"

"treone" and "treie" which are assertively Anglo-Saxon.

The complete passage presents an open struggle between two

worlds impinging on the poet's consciousness. The one is a threat

which could submerge the nascent life he seeks, the other releases

this life by protecting him from the menace. This protection gives

him a new season and with that season a whole series of new concepts

with which he can defeat the past. Yet the substantial presence of

the elegiac winter, brought about by its insistent negative entity

suggests that although the medieval spring will triumph--"Spring is

come"--it is not without a struggle in which the imposition of a new affirmative cannot quite ensure that absence will mean extinction, that "winter is gon." The struggle of spring and winter still needs its resolution, its reconciliation.

The two opposites are resolved and the transference made from winter to spring by a more complex and effective means than the dialectical rejection and affirmation. It is made through a transfer of loyalties away from the Anglo-Saxon lord, who is the natural giver of rings, source of friendship, leader of kin and figure of rule and protection; all this is transferred to "Ure Lefdi" of whom the poet says;

> Alle þine vreondes þu makest riche kinges,
> þu ham givest kinescrud, beies and gold ringes;
> (33-34)

The natural focus of the springtime world, the lady, and of its spiritual meaning, Our Lady, has now been firmly centred in the Anglo-Saxon social world as well. As the true friend who will make kings and give treasure, as the source, not only of the gifts of springtime but of the old epic world, "Ure Lefdi" is in a strong position to deal with the transfer of allegiance from winter to spring.

This is particularly noticeable in the one theme that remains completely unsubdued by the spring, and by the rhetorical pattern. Death should be absent from the "eche sumer" as winter is, yet its uneasy presence cannot be dismissed and returns again later on in the poem after the end of this passage, to menace the poet. The only

hope then is a plea to "Ure Lefdi." She is the last resource:
"and ischild me vrom seoruwe & from eche deaᵹes kare." He trusts
that she will confer upon him that "eche reste" that he sought in
the spring. Thus it is the lady who presides over the whole
struggle ensuring the triumph of spring and its bliss, and of the
eternal and deathless condition with which it is associated. That
is, the final clarity is the lady who embodies not a physical but
a spiritual spring. Yet I hope to suggest that the lady herself
really leads to the spiritual springtime, the "eche sumer," and
that this 'sumer' is a condition of time rather than of season.

The Virgin

As has been suggested, the two aspects of Mary are not usually
combined but perform in separate poems. While the Crucifixion retains
the weeping mother, the maiden, whose bliss remains undefiled by
mortality and suffering, belongs to the theme of Paradise. The
separation of the two is an important indication of the medieval
approach. But even more significant is the image of the maiden who
emerges as the characteristically medieval feminine figure. Not
only does she appear as a divine image in other forms than Mary,
such as the later _Pearl_ Maiden, but she reaches back into the natural
world to claim the beloved. This reversal is demonstrated most
clearly in Thomas of Hales "Love Ron" (_Oxford_, 43), although its
effect can be substantiated throughout medieval life.

Thomas of Hales address to a young girl is an invitation to
find her "leofmon" in the "treowe king." He is compared with

earthly lovers in terms of human love, the ability to give satis-

faction to a woman. This human love is finally so defined:

> Monnes luue nys buten o stunde:
> nv he luueþ, nv he is sad,
> Nu he cumeþ, nv wile he funde,
> nv he is wroþ, nv he is gled.
> His luue is her & ek a-lunde,
> nv he luueþ sum þat he er bed;
> Nis he neuer treowe i-funde -
> þat him tristeþ he is amed.   (49-56)

The other "leofmon" is described not only as rich and handsome but

also as loving noble and trustworthy:

> he is feyr & bryht on heowe,
> of glede chere, of mode mylde,
> of lufsum lost, of truste treowe,
> freo of heorte, of wisdom wilde,   (91-94)

"He is ricchest mon of londe" (97). His riches will bestow upon

the maiden jewels more splendid than those to which Annot is

compared. For these jewels of this love are no longer physical

but heavenly, attributes which dim real jewels:

> Hwat spekestu of eny bolde
> þat wrouhte þe wise salomon
> of iaspe, of saphir, of merede golde,
> & of mony on-oþer ston?
> Hit is feyrure of feole volde
> more þan ich eu telle con;
> þis bold, mayde, þe is bihote
> If þat þu bist his leouemon.   (113-120)

This perfect dwelling is Heaven. This is the "bold" (127) of

"blisse & Ioye & gleo and gal" (126) where she will "wyþ engles

pleye" (133), in "heouene lyht" (134) enjoying a "leofmon" (87) who

is a knight "ful of fyn-amur" (182), a spring day "day wyþ-ute nyhte"

(142), and a light which "schyneþ so bryht in heouene bur" (184),

"i-don in heouene gold" (181). Christ has been likened to the

human lover for a specific purpose—to reveal the spiritual form
that transcends the human being. The means of turning the girl
away from the human externals towards the divine values is simple.
It is by persuading her to remain maiden. It is "Mayden-hod"
(162) which is the true jewel which dims the "iaspe" and "saphir"
(173). It is the "derewurþe gemme" (163), the "tresur" (145) that
makes her "swetture þane eny flur" (151).

Thomas skillfully uses amorous comparisons to confirm a
virtue which rejects love, as love is understood on earth. The
girl retains her protection, her "kastel" as long as she defends
the true lover "þe hwile þu hyne witest vnder þine hemme" (167).
It is then that she is "swetture þan eny spiis" (168). Yet the
ready adaptability of the beloved to this Marian theme of virgin,
and to the kind of argument Thomas conducts here, suggests that the
virtue of maidenhood may have some essential value to the recurrent
image of the lady. No doubt the adulterous current in the troubadour's
love and the attitude of some of the poets to thirteenth century
Alysouns might seem to contradict this. This current insists more
upon the conversion of the spiritual into earthly terms:

> He myhte sayen þat Crist hym seʒe
> þat myhte nyhtes neh hyre leʒe,
> heuene he heuede here.
> (Harley, 7, 82-84)

Yet even in these themes the intercourse is still between heaven
and earth. Even if the virginal core to the beloved's charm is not
fully accepted, it is acknowledged.

It is the steady clustering of virginal imagery around the Heavenly Lady which compels the earthly beloved to acquire this true treasure for it is this alone which will gain her admittance to Paradise:

> And bryngeþ þe wiþ-vte wemme
> in-to þe blysse of paradis.   (Oxford, 43, 165-6)

And it is necessary that she enter this spiritual world in order that she may endow the heavenly lady with that physical grace, that belovedness and preciousness, and the feminine "essence" of love, that the poet has detected in her in the natural world. However, the effect of the virginal figure of Mary upon the earthly maiden is not to achieve the 'assumption' of the beloved but to associate the two in the process of mediation. They exist to open the gates to an eternal landscape. In order to effect this the quest of the natural lady who must always be an imperfect version of the divine lady, must be to embody her 'better half' in the only way possible, by retaining her virginity.

Thus the feminine image becomes central to the whole medieval vision exactly through that association of both heavenly and earthly lady with maiden status, or virginity, for it is this which opens not on to the natural spring but on to a spiritual landscape. The vision of Paradise, which is reflected in the spring of the natural world, discovers its 'essence' in virginity.

It is the temporal influence of virginity which makes it significant. The most revealing words related to maidenhood in

'The Love Ron' are "kastel," "witest" and "wemme." They imply a

protective fortress that will defend against blemish. In "The

Love Ron" the blemish is very obviously associated with that

transience that characterises the human condition in the first

verses. The lover in "þis worldes" is "vikel & frakel & wok &

les" and the human lover is reduced to these lines

> þeos þeines þat her weren bolde
> beoþ aglyden so wyndes bles,
> Vnder molde hi liggeþ colde
> & faleweþ so doþ medewe gres. (13-16)

Not only is this world false but it is also mortal—fatally,

physically and conclusively so: "hi liggeþ colde" (15). But

mortality yields to the theme of transience. The true concern of

transience seems to be not only the unreliability of existence but

also the deceptiveness of experience. It is opposed to the brilliant

and substantial wholeness of the divine whether seen through the

"glas" (34) of the human frame, or in the maid's true gem, or in her

divine lover or in God's light. In comparison to these this world

is: "Al so þe schadewe þat glyt away" (32). To see this world at

all is a kind of blindness a distortion of true sight:

> Forþi he doþ as þe blynde
> þat in þis world his luue doþ;
> Ye mowen iseo þe world aswynde -
> þat wouh goþ forþ, abak þat soþ. (37-40)

It is this connection of virginity with the theme of time which makes

"The Love Ron" the most intense and comprehensive statement of

thirteenth century English religious vision. This poem has recapi-

tulated those aspects of life, love, nature and time, which keep a

strong physical grip on man and has recast them into a new frame-
work of a divine substance which condemns and negates them. It
might almost be said that it empties the grip of time for what
time holds onto has been turned into a shadow. Within man's
temporal existence only virginity represents the divine substance,
the true not the blind or shadowy existence. Without some inter-
vention from the world of light and eternity of Heaven, revealed
not only in the ideal landscape of the springtime but in the purity
of the maiden, man's life is fleeting and insubstantial.

Virginity's influence lies in its active intervention in life.
It is virginity alone which can deny the experience of this world
within this world. Experience tells us of a finite material world
where transience and mortality are in control. This is the world
of "wo" (Oxford, 4, 14), night, generation and death that has
echoed throughout the song of the lady and of spring. But virginity
is without "wemme" (Oxford, 43, 165). Its unblemished state is
that which makes it the ideal of purity. This virginal purity is
simply a description of the withdrawal of virginity from all that
belongs to the 'fleshly dress.' Its purity lies in refusing the act
of love for in that way it isolates itself from all the stain that
love brings, and primarily that sequence of childbearing and death
the 'woman' represents. Virginity is therefore unspotted because
it knows neither lust nor death, nor all the "wo" of the natural
and finite world that cluster around them. That other womankind
that figures in medieval poems of the 'flyting' kind is disgraceful

and disgusting exactly because it is so involved with mortality
and all its pains, contradictions and inevitable dissolution,
through its essential commitment to the flesh.

Hence the importance of Mary as Virgin, for she can live
an existence which is not subject to the pains of childbirth.
The flowers of virginity never fall just as spring never fades,
because the flowers and spring are not physical. They belong to
that divine landscape into which the human longs to be assumed.
The true promise of this landscape is of eternity. The nearest
active image of eternity in human life is virginity. Here, in
little, is that immaculate and timeless condition to which the
mortal aspires. Because it rejects human mortality the lady's
virginity is an image of immortality, though necessarily a cramped
one. It is this non-mortal condition that enables the lady to open
the springtime she inhabits into an ideal landscape, that of Paradise.
It is virginity which makes the divine substantial in human life,
by turning human life and its terrors into a shadow. It is virginity
that makes the time of the natural world exclusively fleeting, a
blindness that afflicts the human in the finite world. It does so
by bringing all the light, flowers or spring of the spiritual world
into the human existence, making eternity a fact of life.

Medieval Darkness

It is undeniable, however, that the figure of the Virgin in
Middle English literature does take on another form as the Mother of

God, that Crucifixion poems are frequent, and that these are allied

to an intensely darkened woe existent in the medieval English lyric,

a world described obsessively in poems of damnation and of sin.

Examples of this damnation theme are numerous as in the poems from the

Oxford text 2, 14, 20, 28a, 29, 30, 46, 48, 65, 75 and 88, together

it might be argued with the Crucifixion poems concentrating upon

Christ; 84, 90, 64, 63, 49, 47 and 45, since these are also concerned

with pain, sin and penalty, all illustrate this medieval 'darkness.'

Nor are these latter poems survivals from an earlier tradition.

They are a fundamental part of the medieval vision. This would seem

to be a contradiction of the whole spring imagery, and of the

interpretation of the supernatural world it implies; for it suggests

that the Middle Ages also lived in a torrent of conflicting impressions

yielding a perception of the complexities of existence similar to

that of the Old English. I hope to suggest, however, that it is

in the very response to this world of woe that the Middle Ages are

most essentially, if also most subtly, distinct from the preceding

culture.

A poem such as "The Latemest Day" (Oxford, 29, 13) is a 'type'

of the world of woe that also follows the pattern of the Wanderer's

song. Here there are the queries about "þine frond, þat faire

þe bihete," (47)

> Hwer is þi bred & þin ale, þi tunne & þine stonde?
>
> (55)

It is death again which conditions this perception in an image that

condenses the hall, the home of living men, into the home of the
dead body, the grave:

Nu schal þin halle Mid spade beon iþrojt, (43)

In this poem the focus on death does not reflect back immediately
on life itself, making the poet, as in Old English, more aware
of its disorderly if vital complexities. The focus here is beyond
the hall wrought with the spade, the grave. This dark home is, for
the poet's living experience, but a prelude to that place where
there comes no light:

Ich am sori inoh bi dai & bi niht,
I schal to þeostre stude þer neauer ne kumeð liht; (101-2)

Thus, in this damnation poem, and in others of its type, Bede's
sparrow has winged his way out of the hall into the darkness, and
the poet's perception has followed him there. Once there he finds
hell. However, when the poet goes on to give woe to "heom ine helle
þet hine schule i-seo" (116), hell has become a place in which man
will still experience, it will still be peopled. The home of the
dark grave, the new hall, has, as it were, projected its contents,
both emotional and physical, into the life that awaits those who are
damned after this existence.

But the 'latemeste' existence, that beyond the grave, also
conditions the poet's living experience. While he perceives those
around him enjoying the pleasures of the "hall," he himself does
not participate for he is "sori inoh bi dai & bi niht" (101). This
perception does not come from present sorrow so much as from

anticipation of the future. If he does take part in life he will

become a "sori soule" (23) in that "stude þer neauer ne kumeð liht;"

(102) that is in hell. This is because death, and the after-world

of hell it controls, has become an existence as real as life itself,

if not more so. This makes life much more dependent upon death

and, indeed, the poet's purpose is to make his readers aware that

this "laste dai þat þe schule heonne fare" is the crisis of

existence whether it be of the individual or of mankind. It is the

pivot which will reorient man, pointing him to his true and lasting

home, be it darkness or light eternal.

Therefore life in the medieval outlook, is dominated by death,

as is seen in a poem such as "Death's Wither-Clench" (Oxford, 10).

Here "al sel valui þe grene" (6) for all "sel drinke of deth-is

drench" (8):

> Ne mai strong ne starch ne kene
> a-ȝlye deth-is wiþer-clench;
> ȝung and old and brith an-siene,
> al he riueth in his streng. (11-14)

The result is a concept of life as "wei-la-wei!" and "iweping" (17)

where no human, whatever his stature, "nis ne King ne Quene" (7), nor

any bliss they feel:

> Houndes ladden and hauekes beren
> And hadden feld and wode?
> þe riche leuedies in hoere bour,
> þat wereden gold in hoere tressour
> wiþ hoere briȝtte rode;
> (Oxford, 48, 2-6)

none of these can take on real existence. All these joys and dignities

belong to life and as properties of this existence they cease to have

real validity, for the life they belong to is but "sin and lustes

stench." For this reason "Heore soules weren forloren" (12). Here

the reality of after-death has asserted itself and made all life

but a "twincling of an eye" (11) whose reality is only the "stench"

of "sinne" (Oxford, 101, 19). Thus death is no longer but one

necessity of life. Instead it is the focus of life, the means by

which living itself is defined. This change in perception also

alters the interpretation of life.

The most simple necessity required by a life after death is

prudence in life, and this becomes the explicit moral of medieval

English Christianity. Awareness of death and the fatal divisions of

the after-life warns man to order life itself more virtuously according

to the rules of the supernatural world:

> Holde þe us clene ut of hordom,
> Masse leten singen & almes-dede don,
> & þið hali chirche maken us i-som;
> þenne mohe ve cþemen crist at þe dom..
>
> (Oxford, 29B, 125-8)

But this perception does not only lead to a moral reorganization.

Life itself must be reinterpreted. It is not only a distraction which

will take the attention away from the crisis of death and its impor-

tance, it is also the source of that judgment which could condemn man

to a world without light, after death. Thus it is no longer only the

misery of life, suffering, pain or death which drives the medieval

poet into torment but also its joys. Those very joys which the Old

English poet could remember with pleasure and regret, a source of

comfort and of further pain in their conflict with sorrow, are

themselves woe, to the medieval poet. "Weole" is a "waried þing"
(Oxford, 40, 1). It is 'cursed' not only because it is inadequate
and transitory but also in that it is itself a source of woe:

> if þi werld mid wele þe sliket
> þat is far to do þe wo. (Oxford, 10, 43-4)

At the "latemeste" (Oxford, 29A, 1) day man must face Christ. There-
fore, all are admonished "þinc, man" "and werche gud bi dai and
nithe." It is that very joy of life which will cripple man at the
day of judgment. He will be condemned as loving life rather than
being concerned with death and "what cometh after."

From such an approach to death arises the impersonality of
the medieval awareness of transience. To the poet, those who were
before us, who are lost in the twinkling of an eye, are people who
are defined by their transience. This means that they are charac-
terised as not fully participating in the divine vision he is
presenting. Thomas of Hales offers a question phrased in words very
like the Wanderer's "Hit is of heom also hit nere" (73) but here
there is no real ambiguity nor doubt. The crux of this sentence is
no longer "as if," "also hit nere" but "Hit is." They _are_ people
who have not been for

> þus is þes world of false fere-
> fol he is þe on hire is bold. (79-80)

His query therefore prefaces an answer to the problem. The "as if"
arises because they lived only in this world and to so trust "þes
world" is to condemn himself to being a shadow for this world is
itself an "as if," a falsity. Thus all those people in the 'ubi

sunt' poems of the Middle Ages are 'they' as far as the poet is concerned, for he is separating himself from them by offering an answer to that which made them vanish:

> Here paradis hy nomen here
> And nou þey lien in helle I-fere, (19-20)

The final answer to the medieval 'ubi sunt' is that the reality they trusted was unreal and they must therefore themselves become unreal. Their mistake was not to perceive, and to depend upon the true reality of the soul. Hence they are sorry souls and "Heore soules weren forloren" (12). They are condemned forever to the world without light in which they had really lived throughout the short span of their existence. This span was the true darkness, the real grave, not for their bodies but for their souls. Their bodies are condemned forever to the grave of life because their souls can never be freed from that darkness.

The true struggle of the medieval darkness is that between the body and the soul and the consequence of this struggle is the "hall" of the grave (Oxford, 29B, 73); from which the soul may well not escape:

> þenne sait þe soule to þe licam,
> Wey þat ic ever in þe com!
> (Oxford 20, 13-14)

> þu salt in horþe wonien & wormes (þe) to-cheuen
> (21)

Shroud and Grave

In this medieval vision the necessities of existence have become more tormented and nightmarish. Life tempts man to its "vikel and frakel"

ways, to its complexities, its pleasures and its doom. If lived

for itself alone life brings the penalty of the latemeste day, the

grave and hell. Thus the true "stench" of "sinnes" (Oxford, 10,

19) is life itself. However, if man can realise this, he has a

means of freeing himself from the penalty. If he learns that every

pleasure is a woe and that life is fundamentally unreal (see the

section on the "Love Ron"), then the soul is released from the body

and enters the "dai wyþ-vte nyhte" (142). However, this assumes

that man is no longer inextricably entangled in life, as experience

of existence in this world, and as the body. Life defined in these

latter terms is an arbitrary imposition on the soul. The existence

of the soul and of the world of heaven to which it aspires, as a

result, presumes that the tensions and pains of living are no longer

insoluble. To the Middle English vision this solution must be found

since the trials of life are the materials for the final judgement

of the "latemeste day."

Time

The radical effects of all the arguments discussed in this

chapter can be seen most clearly in the theme of 'time' to which

all the previous topics are related. For the change in the concept

of 'time' might be argued to provide the motive for all the struggles

in which the poems cited have been engaged. The aim of these

struggles has been to defeat mortality. Time in the Old English lyric

was that which confirmed man's mortality. Winter can also be asso-

ciated with death. It is certainly used in the elegy to express

mourning and loss. 'Woman' as a creature of the natural world is also involved with mortality since birth involves man in existence and therefore implies his death. Woman as a procreative being also emphasises the generations. The differing character of the Middle English lyrics can be seen in its changed treatment of this topic of mortality.

Death in the Old English elegy is an attribute of living. There death and life are inextricably dependent upon each other. The poems primarily confront a recognition of death to discover the quality of life.

Death does not serve the same function in the Middle English vision. It is oriented towards the afterlife. It is the barrier which divides man's mortal existence from his eternal being. As death is related to man's life it is that moment of decision which will commit him to darkness or light. As death is related to the afterlife it becomes an entrance to eternity.

Within such a vision time has a dual nature. It has both a mortal and an immortal character. As has been argued, to be condemned to the place without light means essentially that the soul is unable to move out of its human mortal condition. It will be 'forloren.' But to achieve paradise is to become immortal. It is this latter condition of the afterlife, which alters the concept of time in the Middle English lyric. It is therefore this blessed condition to which I will be referring in the ensuing discussion.

This dual nature of time seems to me to make a vital distinction between the two lyrics. It can be argued that the Old English lyric also presumes a dual time, the mortal and that which lies beyond death; and to the latter it gives a recognisably Christian interpretation. Yet whatever prediction the Old English poet makes about the afterlife is either dogma or is made from his experience of life. As a result of the latter the storms of the outer darkness are described as part of his existence and are defined by his knowledge of that existence. These storms he continually parallels with the joys of living. In the elegies "what cometh after"[10] is essentially that darkness described by Edwin's counsellor in Bede's history. That is, the Old English lyric acknowledges and ponders upon the time beyond death but admits ignorance of its nature. Although it probes the afterlife it does not endow it with an existence independent of human experience. As a result the Old English lyric does not share the radiant affirmation of the reality of the afterlife that brings such rapture to the Middle English lyric.

The Middle English lyric acquires the afterlife as an independent existence by using the focal point of death. This divides the afterlife from life itself. The rapturous condition, the joy, lies outside life. It is, of course, possible for the Middle English lyric poet to bring this radiance into his own life through the spring or virgin, and later he does so more completely in the lyric of the mystic. However, each of these sources of 'radiance' is

firmly allied to the eternal condition after death. That is, they are but imitations of the afterlife and are not natural to life itself. The result of this separation of the afterlife from life is to channel all the joys, virtues and satisfactions of life into eternity, the bliss of Paradise, leaving darkness, pain and sin behind in this 'vikel and frakel' life. Thus darkness and light, pain and joy are separated from each other. In effect this is to create a further and perhaps ultimate struggle, between mortal and immortal time, time and eternity.

The struggle has been defined in the "Love Ron" as between the shadows of mankind and the brilliant lasting substance of those who achieve Paradise. It can also be seen in the poems of Judgement which are pervaded by the damnation inherent in the human, mortal concerns of existence. In both cases it is the empirical nature of time, that which teaches man of transience and mortality, which is the sin. But in moving out into the outer darkness of "what cometh after" and in differentiating it from life the Middle English lyric is able to free man from this time. Eternity represents this freedom. To gain this freedom the medieval English lyric is required to reject any grip of transient mortal life upon the bliss of eternity. Then there exists a place where men will not be shadows but substantial, where "deað ne come" (Oxford, 3, 37). This vision also illuminates infinity making it light not dark, a "dei þið-ute nihte" (59).

The Old English lyric poet can only determine the afterlife by his own experience. He can perceive it as potential non-existence, as his own exile, although he struggles to recognise his identity

within that condition. Meanwhile the Middle English poet seems to have effected an interesting reordering of his experience. He has defined his reactions to existence, pain and joy, and has separated them. He has then located them in two separate time-schemes. Time and life contain the pain, a pain which he basically sees as derived from mortality. Eternity contains the joy and is immortal.

The interesting aspect of this theme of time, as of the season and of woman, is the handling of tensions. In the Old English poem these remained dynamic, if chaotic. Indeed tension meant experience and living to the lone identity of the exile. However, although the medieval poet must know the confusions of existence, of pain and joy, life and death, love and loss, he has also devised a means of ordering them. It is in the Middle English lyric that these tensions become clearly defined struggles.

The technique employed to achieve these struggles is to organise the tensions into definite outlines thus giving them clear limits within which to operate. The lyric discovers what the woman, the lady, winter, spring, time and eternity mean according to the two time schemes. Once so defined they can be manoeuvred. The formula, although not always so well defined as in the poems selected, is basically opposition in a combat of pairs. In such combat one part of the pair may be overcome. That is, in ordering the tensions of existence, the Middle English lyric poet believes he has found a way to defeat them.

Thus I would argue that not only are there significant changes in the Middle English lyric in the topics under discussion in this thesis, but also that an interesting technique has emerged. This is the stage-management of tension into argument. The aim of each argument studied has ultimately been to ensure that existence will no longer be involuntarily subject to mortality and transience. But the ordering of the tensions is itself of interest in that it implies that the medieval vision is deeply concerned with organisation, that is it is more schematic than the Old English. This suggests a dependence upon systems and indeed I would argue that this need for and interest in the making of systems is one of the most comprehensive characteristics of the Middle Ages. It is this 'system' as it effects the arts, and the lyric, that I wish to discuss in some detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SYSTEM

The proposition that the Middle Ages tended to seek a 'system' has rested so far only on a poetic structuring of life into the shape of an argument. The system is shown in this argument by its limitation of concepts to defined statements which are then organised into a debate. To this debate an answer is a necessary outcome. That is, the system implies definition, organisation and solution. Such a schematic exploration of thought is arguably the consequence of the intense but structured reasoning habits of the Middle Ages which are known as scholasticism. This is a movement which brings definition to the mental life of the Middle Ages and attempts solution. But the same search for definition, organisation and solution can also be seen socially in yet another acknowledged medieval system, the feudal system.

This organisation of the community needs some description in order to indicate the differences brought about in English society by the Middle Ages. These changes are related to the system in that this medieval social effort is an attempt to provide a regulated definition. This latter is one of the more noticeable differences between the society that dominates Old English literature and that which influences medieval literature. A description of this organisation is in some ways less easy to provide for England in that it must take into account the upheaval of the Conquest. In other ways it is simpler in that feudalism is more effectively applied in England than elsewhere in Europe and in that it begins to function in this comprehensive manner as a result of the Conquest.

It seems accurate to claim as do Bagley and Rowley in <u>A</u>

<u>Documentary History of England</u> that : "William the Conqueror found

himself ruler of a country that was already feudal, . . ."[1] Neverthe-

less their comment that "Norman and feudal are almost interchangeable"[2]

leads to the conclusion reached by Ganshof, the authority on Continental

feudalism, that "English feudalism was the creation of the Norman

Conquest."[3] The reason suggested by Bagley and Rowley is not the simple

principle of feudalism itself, but the following fact:

By 1087, the year in which he died, William had considerably systematized
English administration.[4]

Ganshof also points towards this interpretation of feudalism as systematic

when he says that in "the classical age of feudalism," "the period between

the tenth and thirteenth centuries," "the system of feudal institutions

arrived at its completest development."[5] This system is described as

a social structure by Brooke in <u>From Alfred to Henry III</u>:

Feudal society was a hierarchy, with the king at the summit and the
humble knights, the lowest class of the truly professional soldiers, at
its foot.[6]

Such is the description also offered by D. J. A. Matthew in <u>The</u>

<u>Norman Conquest</u>, a work which relates the Norman Conquest to the society

in which it settled: "Norman society is governed by the feudal hierarchy."[7]

It is from this work that I wish to take the suggestions which outline

the difference between this feudal setting and the concept of society

governing Old English literature, although these conclusions are implied

in most of the works on the period. As the features of Anglo-Saxon

society referred to here are from a much later and more feudalised

period than that in which _Beowulf_ is written, the similarity in principles between the two is interesting.

Matthew indicates that the main change lies in the relation between men and is derived from their attitudes to their rights because "personal relationships rooted in the land were new to England."[8] According to Barrow in _Feudal Britain_, in pre-Conquest society:

> . . . land was usually held either by immemorial inheritance, without specific service, or by an outright grant from the Crown, or else under a lease. . . .[9]

The disappearance of these rights that did not require service, or of the lease in which the services were temporary, seems to have been the significant change, for these earlier conditions also presume other social relations which altered with feudalism. As Matthew claims, the Anglo-Saxon lessees or 'thegns' "had the right to seek their personal lord where they liked."[10] This practice even persisted after the Conquest "but the Normans clearly disliked it and attempted to curtail it,"[10] for this meant not only the freedom of "changing their lords" but also "the liberty of taking their land where they liked."[11] The Norman objection arises from their belief that "lordship was permanent and that service would henceforth be rendered along fixed lines."[12] This is the change which presumes a clearly organised and defined system socially.

By making landholding hereditary, by fixing its services and by relating these not to a personal choice of lord but to what is essentially a family, the opportunity arises for formal organisation. Some reliable permanence has been established.

Such organizing obviously demands very careful definition of
the rights and services it requires. Thus Domesday Book is but the
first of a long series of such definitions which become steadily more
legal and gradually embody more principles, but nevertheless basically
apply themselves to details and specifics. A fine example of such an
attitude is given in Stenton's English Feudalism 1066-1166[13] according
to which the Earls of Chester and Leicester define their castle-
building, their right to make war and their responsibilities to lord
and tenant. Equally specific is the Assize of Clarendon, the legal
statement of Henry II's reign, and perhaps also the Magna Carta itself.

Thus feudalism presumes more than the simple outlines of the
'argument' which has so far been advanced as the 'system.' Instead it
is like the close and detailed texture that the argument assumes under
scholastic reasoning. There is socially a need for definition and
organisation. This need also reveals a society remodelling itself. It
is this latter object of producing a well-defined organism from the
growing body of rules and charters which sign and seal every duty, role
and gesture which makes the organisation of early medieval England into
a 'system.'

The change is from a voluntary and mobile society which is
wholly aristocratic in interpretation but socially comprehensive. The
voluntary character of Anglo-Saxon society has already been suggested.
The mobility, relative in comparison with modern views but noticeable in
contrast to the medieval state, perhaps needs some support. Barrow
claims:

. . . aristocratic as they were, the English recognised that mere agricultural and commercial prosperity could admit a man into the governing class: a churl who throve so well that he owned five "hides" of land, and a merchant who made three voyages at his own expense, were held to be worthy of "thane-right."[14]

Such a mobility is also substantiated, although in a less verifiable way, by the image of exile which dominated Old English literature, and which remained a fact until after the Conquest since it was the means used by many of the 'thegns' to cope with the arrival of the Normans. This kind of exile is not merely an indication of the destruction of the social organism as it has appeared in the first section. The image of the sea with which it is often coupled makes it also a reflection of the potential mobility of this society and therefore in addition confirms the more voluntary nature of its relationships. This perhaps explains the confidence of an exile such as the Seafarer in his new-found independence. Indeed in contrast with the medieval version of this exile condition, the outlaw, such confidence is characteristic of all Old English exiles. It is not that the outlaw is not a robust enough character but that, as his name implies, he is still in a close, if inverse, relation with his society. There is not in medieval England the same opportunity for freedom from society through the will of the individual and his own mobility. Hence, it might be suggested, the image of the sea is no longer dominant in Middle English.

The feudal society is by contrast with the Anglo-Saxon, static, "fixed." Its relations are involuntary, in that they are hereditary, and are enforced by written formulas which become steadily more legal but are always specific and precise. As a result, they are the more

binding. Feudal society shows a care for detail which indicates a close and intricate pattern. This pattern is created in the careful definition of obligations, rights and services. However, it becomes a 'system' in its aim which is not to deal with the local, the temporary or, indeed, the personal, for themselves, but in order to provide a permanent, impersonal definition of the social organism which must respect the patterns.

I have chosen to describe the medieval system in its social setting primarily in order to relate this to the previous society, since Anglo-Saxon society is so important a contribution to its literature. Although its effects are felt, the later medieval form of society is not so immediate a contribution to literature. The reason for this less direct social involvement justifies including the whole social question in the discussion of the system. Although the feudal system is as much a living fact as any social arrangement, it also makes a ready appeal to the schematic and intellectual approach. It has a close parallel in the patterns of medieval reasoning, scholasticism. While the feudal system supplies a description of this style in action socially, the root of this system lies in the thought patterns. It is scholasticism therefore, which reveals most about the system as a whole. For scholasticism indicates how deeply this system is rooted in the 'patterning' of thought. I believe this close relation between social and intellectual disciplines to be an important aspect of this early medieval setting. I do not intend to investigate the scholastic style in detail but to use it as a guide to the artistic 'system' by tracing it at work in architecture and in the Middle English lyric.

But my introductory discussion will indicate how deeply the patterns and method that scholasticism reveals are felt in medieval life, not only in its thought and art, but also in its society.

I would stress, however, that these patterns are part of a system and that the system in its comprehensiveness as well as in its organisation, indicates a search for form. It is this search which characterises the medieval style thus making the scholastic, or intellectual, method so relevant an approach. I wish therefore to discuss briefly the problem of form as it is found in the Middle English lyric before I turn to the artistic and intellectual 'systems.' My discussion will also make apparent the limitations of applying the elements of a fully European medieval style to the Middle English lyric of the thirteenth century. The English lyric seeks form and the form sought is Continental, but such a form is not found in this period.

These limitations are partially related to social changes and it is useful to establish this relation first. Since however it is a problem primarily embodied in language, as I suggested in the previous chapter, and since the implications of these linguistic aspects of social change recur throughout the remainder of this thesis, the present discussion will be brief.

Anglo-Saxon society interpreted itself by aristocratic values, steadily embodied more and more in the principle of kingship. Such a principle does not deny a popular tradition, for this must have been a vital factor, if only because after the Conquest it could receive and preserve much of the Old English style. The popular tradition was also

a way of life, even if it was only briefly recorded in a work such as the Maxims. In addition, as has been suggested, there was some upward mobility. Nevertheless, the literate, administrative and linguistic values of this society were essentially aristocratic. The effect of this can be seen in language since, with the appearance of an English king, his Wessex speech became what we would now call a standard English by the end of this period. This suggests that the aristocratic values were not isolated but were instead a comprehensive interpretation of the community as a whole.

Such a condition was altered after the Conquest, partly by the clearer definitions of feudalism, and partly because the governing class was new, foreign and non-English-speaking. One result was the elimination of Wessex speech which meant that there was no longer a standard English. The English language became a number of equal and independently developing dialects. This is one reason for the re-emergence of 'English' literature with Chaucer as, by his time, the East Midlands dialect had become standard and this was the speech that Chaucer chose. But, in the iterim, English was more localised and was much more the property of the popular tradition. The Conquest also, in drawing a clear line not only in speech but in race and influence, at least on the very large scale between noble and peasant, freed this popular tradition from aristocratic interpretation. Throughout the Middle Ages, therefore, this tradition became steadily more flourishing and independent. It is from this tradition that the Middle English lyric must be derived since it uses the vernacular. That this lyric continually

orients itself to the aristocratic, or courtly, style and attempted to

discover and use the mannerisms and skills not only of the local nobles

but also of the European culture with which they were allied, will

become apparent in the remainder of this chapter. Nevertheless, it

must be remembered that this lyric is often, in both language and

perception, subject to the influence of the popular tradition, and to

the strengths and weaknesses of that tradition. In relation to form

these conditions of origin inhibit the full absorption of the

Continental style, making the Middle English lyric both clumsier and

less affected. This will be apparent in the brief discussion as to the

influence of the troubadours on the Middle English lyric which follows.

The search for literary form in the Middle Ages is compared by

Sypher to "sinewy plausible logic" "pursued through every phase of sic

et non by scholastic philosophers":

The same elastic transitions sustain the movement of Dante's terza rima,
a form of verse allowing the poem to develop continually in many direc-
tions through an involved and subtle syntax. Every nuance of inflection,
pace, and meter - every inversion, elision, echo, overflow and pause -
is heard in the shifting tempo of the aba, bcb, cdc terzains which carry
the narrative ceaselessly through canto after canto with a fluid
restrained progress. There operates in Dante's terza rima and gothic
architecture a principle of "progressive divisibility" analogous to the
co-ordinations, the delicate articulations, of syllogism in a scholastic
thesis, ramifying incessantly into parts of parts until it comes to its
conclusion after traversing its argument encyclopaedically. Scholasticism
discriminates finely.[15]

These parallels between logic, architecture and poetry imply that the

Middle Ages were as concerned with articulating their verse as their

society, buildings and arguments. The cause is easy to find. The long

adolescence of the Dark Ages is at an end and with its close the European

language of Latin and the babble of tongues that invaded it had to be

compounded into some kind of maturity. This maturity will be that of

the vernacular tongues and primarily of those arising from the old

European Roman language. These were to give the new European culture

its articulation.

The first tongue so to mature as a modern European language is

Provençal, and then follows, under its influence, the Italian vernacular.

In both, a considerable intellectual concern with the formalities of

rhyme and stanza are apparent. The poet is not only concerned with

concepts but with the precision of verse and vocabulary in which to

express them. Thus the troubadours can be claimed in some sense as

'makers' of the European poetic language for, in Ker's words:

Everything that is commonly called poetry in the modern tongues may in
some way or other trace its pedigree back to William of Poitiers singing—
> "Farai chansoneta nova,
> Ans que vent ni gel ni plova;
> Ma domna m'assaj' em prova
> Consi de qual guiza l'am."

The thrill of rhymes like these is the first awakening of the world for
that long progress of literature in which the Renaissance and other
momentous changes are merely incidental and ordinary things, compared with
the miracle of the first beginning.[16]

As he argues: "There is nothing old-fashioned in the manner of the verse."[17]

The importance of the troubadours' search for poetic form lies,

therefore, in its control of European lyric verse forms; that these

men were 'probes' for the poetry of the Romance and Christian culture

that was to be 'European' from now on. I have taken only a few signifi-

cant details from the work of H. J. Chaytor The Troubadours in England

as brief examples of the effect of this troubadour verse upon English

lyric. They may also indicate some of the developments of Provençal

poetry.

Chaytor cites "Wyþ longyng y am lad" (<u>Harley</u>, 5) and "Lenten ys

come" (<u>Oxford</u>, 81) as examples of "the rules for stanza construction as

formulated by Dante." A stanza could be divided into 3 parts the first

two repeating each other in structure, the 3rd different. These made

the two "pes" and the "coda" as in the following:

> Wiþ longyng y am lad,)
> on molde y waxe mad,)   Pes
>   a maid marreþ me;)
> Y grede, y grone, unglad,)
> for selden y am sad   )   Pes
>   þat semly forte se   )
> Leuedi, þou rewe me!   )
> To rouþe þou hauest me rad.)   Coda
> Be bote of þat y bad;   )
> my lyf is long on þe.   )

Where both first and second parts of the stanza are divided, the divisions

are named the two 'pes' and the two 'versus,' and this is the form

found in "Lenten ys come" the division between 'pes' (2) and 'versus'

(1) occurring at "Uch foul singe." Equally in what Chaytor calls

"genres" there is a likeness. Thus the <u>canso</u> or love poem of "five to

seven stanzas with tornada or envoy" is the kind to which "Alysoun"

belongs.[18]

It would be inaccurate to argue however that the English lyric

was greatly influenced by the Provençal; and such influence as does

occur seems to have been effected primarily through contact with the

verse of Northern France which was itself more provincial than Provençal.

Nevertheless the meagreness of actual influence does not deny a need

for the form the troubadours were pursuing, nor a general reorientation
of the English lyric towards the same objectives, if less skillfully.
In English, however, the problem was more fundamental. Owing to the
conditions prevailing in England where medieval culture was brought in
with a new aristocracy, a new social order, and in a new speech, in
successive conquests from Norman to Angevin, the problem of form was
concentrated upon language. These social changes obviously explain
the lack of skill, but they also reveal some of the more general and
European motives behind the search for form in verse.

Chaytor outlines some of the problems facing England in its
effort to adapt to a Romance tongue when he says that

a Teutonic metrical system could not attempt to reproduce the out-
standing features of Romance systems.[19]

This comment approaches the true problem form must solve for the new
culture. The effort of the Romance languages in Europe to develop their
style, to articulate their form, must always be in the context of those
barbarian Germanic tongues that had helped to shatter the old language
of Europe. The maturity they sought would be an attempt to give voice
neither to the Romance nor to the Germanic alone, but to provide a
language which fused both. This was an overwhelming task, for even in
the matter of rhythm the "ear accustomed to an accentual rhythm" "was
required to accommodate itself to a syllabic system."[19] It was not possible
to imitate much of the Romance style in England, particularly in rhymes,
owing to the difference between consonantal and vowel languages, and to
the closed textural patterning of stress in Germanic verse. For this

latter is not readily adapted to the more open pattern of syllable and
rhyme of the Romance tongues. Yet Middle English made a decided attempt
to imitate and to acclimatise this style to the English language even
in its first importation, in order to make its lyrics a part of the
greater Continental voice. And it pursued this attempt unrelentingly
through 'aureate', Chaucerian and Petrarchean until this 'voice' had
been domesticated. Perversely, as the Continental style grew more
manageable so the native English style seemed to be released: witness
the alliterative revival approximately contemporary with the Chaucerian
mastery of the French influence. It is obvious that during this
period the English language was struggling to merge its Romance and
Germanic inheritances and finally found success in a new composite
language with its new rhythms. English is perhaps the most pronounced
example of this effort to blend a dual linguistic heritage.

While it is difficult, therefore, to argue that the Provençal
lyric influenced the Middle English, the accessibility of the new
European culture which was reaching its peak in France undoubtedly gives
the Middle English lyric its distinctiveness. Middle English did
participate in what has been called the "twelfth century Renaissance,"
although only after a delay and from a distance, for these poets were
reproducing the Continental style in different, that is less courtly,
conditions. The Middle English lyric, as a result, appears to be more
homely and unsophisticated than its Continental parallels. As I have
suggested, this may be due to the passing of the English literary tradi-
tion into a more popular tradition.

This popular tradition does not however, define the Middle English lyric any more completely than does the courtly style. The most obvious reason is the Church's rejection of the popular lyric for this rejection sets a barrier between the secular oral song and the religious literary lyric, and, since most scribal work was done by clerics, this ecclesiastical rejection would have ensured that the literary secular lyrics were not of the popular oral style.

There are, however, more fundamental ways in which the literary lyric distinguishes itself from the popular lyric. These are the ways which characterise the Middle English lyric as medieval. These distinctions arise from the 'systematic' habits of the medieval mind.

The primary 'system' of the Middle Ages is that of thought, the development of philosophy in carefully patterned logic which is known as scholasticism. This I would claim as the core of medieval systems in that it works upon the principles of systematising itself. Its influence is far-reaching and I intend to deal with that influence alone rather than with scholasticism itself. Panofsky in <u>Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism</u> claims that "Directly it affected all the arts":

As music became articulated through an exact and systematic division of time . . . , so did the visual arts become articulated through an exact and systematic division of space, resulting in a "clarification for clarification's sake" of narrative contexts in the representational arts, and of functional contexts in architecture.[20]

Scholastic logic is apparent in music and poetry as well as architecture but, in first detailing the principles upon which it worked, I shall use architecture as an example owing to the valuable work done in this field by Panofsky.

He defines the principles of scholasticism by referring to the three systematic habits of mind they demonstrate:

(1) totality (sufficient enumeration), (2) arrangement according to a system of homologous parts and parts of parts (sufficient articulation), and (3) distinctness and deductive cogency (sufficient interrelation) . . . .[21]

The first principle of totality is that which allows us to "speak of the High Gothic plan."[22] The totality of this "plan" is the effort to "synthesize all major motifs handed down by separate channels."[23]

Referring specifically to the Church at St. Denis, Henderson in Gothic relates this synthesizing as it appears in both scholasticism and architecture:

The way in which the incoherent mass of experimental forms, thrown out almost haphazardly by earlier artists, is . . . clarified and disciplined, offers a most striking analogy to the creative process of the authors of the new theology of Paris who, as I have said, reconciled, ordered, and expounded with an unprecendented precision and sense of direction the accumulated authority of the past.[24]

The implication in both quotations is that a wealth of thought and information is being organized into a new whole. Organising into synthesis is the source of the medieval system.

This synthesis is a complex structure which does not ignore the component parts. This involves the second of the principles Panofsky presents--"sufficient articulation."[25] This requires precise formation of the parts so that all have a particular identity. It leads to the abundant detail of the medieval arts. The principle of unity, however, is still paramount. All the parts "that are on the same logical level" "came to be conceived of as members of a class." Therefore, "enormous variety" tended to be suppressed "in favor of standard types" which

produced a "relative uniformity"[26] in the structure.

For the final principle of "sufficient interrelation"[27] ensured that while the clear identity of the particulars was proclaimed they were also related in a "whole." The means by which this was done is the pattern. It is this patterning which is the distinction of the "language" of the Middle Ages. This pattern is basic to the medieval system. Rowland in The Shapes We Need describes the system outlined by Panofsky in the actual structure of the argument: "This complicated structure of thought was firmly held together by the main argument. The overall pattern of such a work in spite of its many subdivisions could always be perceived."[28]

It is possible to see these principles at work in the poem by turning to the theme of spring. In so doing I wish to take the opportunity to discriminate between this style, derived from the French-based European culture of the Middle Ages, and the formal style produced by the popular tradition. In the period under consideration there are only two poems wholly devoted to spring--"Summer is i-cumen in" (Oxford, 6) and "Lenten ys come" (Oxford, 81). Although the former is the work of a highly skilled poet it is usually accepted as popular. The latter illustrates the scholastic plan.

In "Sumer is i-cumen in" the focus is upon vegetation and animals and it is these which express the new season's arrival. They do so through the dynamic sense of movement to the projection of which both rhythm and language are directed. Everything grows, blows and springs. The words used are imperative, indicating immediate and

vigorous action

> Groweþ sed and bloweþ med
> and springþ þe wde nu.
> (<u>Oxford</u>, 6, 3-5)

This movement veers urgently and compulsively to the themes of birth

"Awe bleteþ after lomb" (6) and mating: "Bulluc sterteþ, bucke verteþ"

(8). The poem is a celebration of the riotous outbreak of fertile

life in spring.

Such a spring world is created by the speed of the pictures

flashed rapidly, but with substance and colour, onto the poetic frame.

The syntax depends upon active tenses for the creation of a mobile

sequence. The form is organic rather than sequential arising in many

directions from the primary root so that spring grows. Syntax, words,

images and theme all project the vitality that arises from action. This

organically ordered sensual perception therefore suggests a fusion of

mood with landscape as a result of tactile and muscular response.

This is more characteristic of the popular response to the season

rather than of the Middle English literary lyric. Thus "Sumer is i-cumen

in," although undoubtedly medieval, seems to stand apart from its contem-

poraries. It seems to be, not only one of the earliest Middle English

poems extant, from around 1230-40,[29] but also the only one of its kind

preserved. It will, I believe, become apparent as the discussion

progresses, how this poem differs from the others to be studied. The

difference however lies basically in the replacement of the immediacy

of physical involvement by a formalised sensual response. In this latter

lies the 'system' as it applies itself to the lyric in English.

The more conventional description of Spring in Middle English is to be found in "Lenten ys come" (Oxford, 81). This poem presumes that there are certain properties peculiar to spring, these being primarily flowers, birds and love. Flowers are particularised as "dayesʒes" in the first verse, as roses and lilies in the second. Birds are "nyhtegales" (5), and "þrestelcoc" (7), in the first, "drakes" and "miles" in the second. Throughout run the "foules" (10) and "briddes" (2) the class to which all birds belong as do the particular flowers to the "blostmen" (2). All serve as specifications of a spring scene to detail <u>how</u> "Lenten ys come with loue to toune" (1), that is, "With blostmen and with briddes roune."(2).

This poem does not communicate a sense of growth through a structure of images. It is rather a list of external features compiling a statement of spring's characteristics. Thus it collects the birdsongs ("briddes roune") and the "blostmen" (2), the "dayeseʒes" (4), the "nyhtegales" (5) and "þrestelcoc" (7), the roses and lilies. The spring it defines appeals to sight rather than to muscles or touch. The satis- factions of this accumulation of the properties of the season have most relevance to the grammatical definitions of landscape as described by Matthew of Vendome:

"The bird twitters, the brook murmurs, the breeze blows warm"; next,
"The birds give pleasure by their voices, the brook by its murmuring,
the breeze by its warmth, . . ."[30]

It is in the cumulative list and in the patterns made within this list that spring is formed rather than 'grows.'

The scene remains general, not dealing with one special rose or a particular nightingale. This is more apparent in the setting which is not in any one place but in "dales" (4) and "dounes" (27) throughout the

countryside. Thereby the unity of a whole, or general, condition is
met, an essence of springtime flowering in all the greenwoods and
grasslands. Yet it is an essence that while it remains universal and
anonymous, is nevertheless enumerated in all its parts. For, in
detailing the particulars--the rose set upon its own stalk, the leaves
in the bright wood--an identity is achieved for these particulars.
The naming and characterising process gives to the essential form its
particular outline. Therefore, roses and "dayeseyes" (4), while flowers,
are different flowers, and while they refer to all roses and daisies
they have the identity of a particular example derived from picturing
them in their natural setting. The poem has listed the properties of
the natural world with a view to relating and also differentiating them.
The result is a distinctness in the totality of spring.

When describing the flowers on a medieval tapestry Roger-A.
D'Hulst in Flemish Tapestries claims that "Nature has been observed
closely enough to make their identification easy. . . ."[31] Yet while
it is obvious that the Middle Ages did, in fact, show in Valency's
words, "keen observation and a genuine feeling for nature. . . ."[32]
it is also evident that this feeling is not used to reproduce the
natural world, but that natural objects are set in a new context,
that of patterning. D'Hulst completes his comment saying "their repre-
sentation remains schematic and follows a strict formula."[33] Dvorak
sums it up thus:

Again and again formal elements of pictorial reproduction and their
individual parts are dissociated from the framework of the natural
relationships upon which they are based and are inserted into other
systems of reference. . . .[34]

The new "systems of reference" are rational as well as visual. They are proper not only to Matthew's grammatical divisions but also to scholasticism and to Gothic architecture. What Rowland calls the "visual language of the Middle Ages"[35] can be detected in all and it is a language which embraced the period's experience and its ambitions and which is illustrated in the poem discussed. In the comparison between these differing disciplines, some of the principles behind the 'language' have been discovered. These principles are mainly related to technique. For the discussion has suggested that scholasticism, and the arts paralleled with it, required a systematic ordering of sensual responses by visual and rational processes. The purpose is to provide synthesis by clarification.

It is logic that clarifies in the arrangement of cathedral, argument or poem. This logic is not designed to perceive nature accurately so much as to discover "the inner discipline of the abstract structure."[36] It is this "inner discipline" which is sought by "the High Gothic plan,"[37] by scholastic reasoning and by the formal recording of nature in the poem. Knowledge of this discipline is achieved primarily through the intellect, for, as Panofsky argues, faith "had to be 'manifested' through a system of thought complete and self-sufficient within its own limits. . . ."[38] Aquinas also argues that thought is necessary to the knowledge of this "inner discipline" or perfected form:

Now the knowledge of the artificer is the cause of the things made by his art from the fact that the artificer works through his intellect. Hence the forms in the intellect must be the principle of action, . . .[39]

The intellect works in the pattern providing a discipline for the theme

which means that as Rowland says "The overall pattern of such a work

. . . could always be perceived."[40]

The large pattern, the 'plan' or 'totality' required by logic,

is the argument. This is also formalised into a pattern by Abelard

who structures argument into the 'sic et non,' 'thus and not so.'

Panofsky says of this method:

Abelard showed himself very conscious of his boldness in exposing the
"differences or even contradictions" (ab invicem diversa, verum etiam
invicem adversa) within the very sources of revelation. . . .[41]

He claims that, although "Abelard mischievously refrained from propo-

sing solutions," "it was inevitable that such solutions should be worked

out."[42] Thus the "process of argumentation in the scholastic writings"

is an

. . . alignment of one set of authorities (videtur quod . . .) against
the other (sed contra 43. .), [which] proceeds to the solution (res-
pondeo dicendum . . .)[43]

This is what Panofsky calls the "technique of reconciling the seemingly

irreconcilable."[44] But it is necessary to note that although "they had

to be reconciled in the end," they had, first, "to be worked through to

the limit."[45]

This argument can be observed in the poetic structure in an

instinctive identification and opposition of contraries. Within the

poem the contraries are often emotional facts and are structured by

emotional responses, but this structure is itself organised by the

intellectual principle of argument. I have earlier suggested examples

of this method, the opposition of lady and woman, and the opposing of

winter and spring. However, I wish to present a further example here
of this structuring by 'contraries,' of the medieval 'sic et non' so
that the style of the 'argument' may be recalled.

The poetic structuring of 'sic et non' can be seen also in
images of place. The images of place which most accentuate duality and
conflict are the seasonal ones. These are in an equivocal relation to
time and place. They are basically derived from a time scheme, yet also
readily yield a scene or landscape to the mind. This is the reason
for the survival of the winter image carrying with it landscapes of
darkness, snow or cold, which would also suggest death to the medieval
mind. This is also the reason for the stress upon the spring landscape.
In addition, it is as part of a duality that this latter season emerges,
for it progressively rejects, negates and then excludes winter. Yet
they not only make a ready pair whose conflict is archaic, but also
offer a fertile conversion of the time theme into images of place.
Once these two have been established as contraries, as in "God Ureisun,"
they can be applied to the place to which each belongs.

Winter and its landscapes belong to the natural world. Once
evoked, it brings a barren darkened land to mind. In contrast spring
blossoms and is gay. But the places carry themes within them. Winter
is associated with existence as experienced, with the mortality that
defines that experience, and becomes this human world. Spring, as its
opposite, is assigned to the eternal world of the divine order. It is
an image of Heaven, the place sought by the medieval world in all its
spring landscapes. It is on these terms that they conflict.

Again in place as well as in time such an opposition ensures struggle and eventually defeat of one of the pair. I would argue, with Panofsky, that this is an inevitable consequence of argument by conflict in pairs opposed, by 'sic et non.' Such an argument provokes the search for a solution. Such a solution is the synthesis, the resolution, the final clarification. This is the motive for the devising of the system of logic and pattern. The attempt is to resolve the argument by means of the pattern. This pattern is perhaps the reason for the very deep-rooted need for this 'sic et non' argument. For it means that tensions are not left in a fluid and unresolved condition as in Old English. Instead they are identified in the pattern of contraries, they are then opposed in a fatal duality to which resolution is the inevitable outcome. The argument therefore again imples not only pattern but synthesis.

The argument is conducted by means of logic, and within its framework logic ensures a pattern much more closely textured than is the simpler system of contraries which is established by the 'plan' of the argument. This detailed pattern of logic is perhaps seen at its most extreme as applied in "Annot and John" (Oxford, 3). Here, as in "The Fair Maid of Ribblesdale" (Oxford, 7) and "Blow Northerne Wind" (Oxford, 14), the poem is devoted to the definition of the lady. Her 'form' is subjected to the categories of jewels (verse 1), flowers (verse 3), birds (verse 3), spices and herbs (verse 4), and mighty humans of varying virtues (verse 5). These contain aspects of that 'preciousness' which is a quality of the lady. Indeed in this poem

the maiden's distinctness or identity is almost used to provide a
definition of this 'preciousness.' This quality resides in her
primarily, since she is its ultimate form, but is also found in varying
other instances which thereby, in defining her preciousness, discover
their own identity.

The technique becomes apparent in the first verse. Here the
instance of preciousness is jewels, and each is further elaborated
in its own line as

> ase saphyr in seluer semly on syht,
> ase iaspe þe gentil þat lemeþ wiþ lyht,
> ase gernet in golde ant ruby wel ryht;
> ase onycle he ys on yholden on hyht,
> ase diamaund þe dere in day when he is dyht;
> he is coral ycud wiþ cayser ant knyht;
> ase emeraude amorewen þis may haueþ myht.

It concludes by returning to the lady:

> þe myht of þe margarite haueþ þis mai mere
> ffor charbocle ich hire ches bi chyn ant by chere

The strict regularity of this almost mathematical pattern demonstrates
the severe logic of the scholastic sense of form. Thus each verse is
devoted to a separate genus, each line to species of the genus. When
the poem is finished, the maiden's quality has been fully enumerated in
all its parts, in a considerable variety which can elaborate fully the
multiplicity of the particulars owing to the unity of the general
theme. The poem is articulated fully as a whole under divisions and
subdivisions with a general heading that gives unity to each part and
with an overall heading which welds all the particulars into the whole
of the "burde in boure" and that which is precious in her, that

preciousness which resides in being beloved.

When "blostmen," birds and jewels are carefully patterned into a logical structure, as they are in "Annot and John" and "Lenten ys come," they become instances, or examples, of a more general theme disciplining that whole structure. They become surface examples of what Dvorak has called the "inner discipline" of the scholastic reasoning, of the cathedral, or the poem. They are therefore the particulars illustrating the essence or "totality" of the plan. In this sense they are signs of a deeper reality. In the Middle Ages this deeper reality is spiritual and it is for the discovery of this spiritual content that the patterns of the natural world are devised. That is, the role of the intellect, of the pattern, of the system itself, is to discover the logic of the spirit working in finite nature. Therefore, the 'language' of the Middle Ages is essentially a symbolic language, as Clark in Landscape into Art argues:

The less an artifact interests our eye as imitation, the more it must delight our eye as pattern, and an art of symbols always evolves a language of decoration.[46]

Herbert Read in Art and Society suggests the reason which leads the artist to this patterning, when he asks how man can "represent the transcendental":

Only by abstracting from reality, by seeking an essential structure, a skeleton of the object. He geometricizes his representation of the object, and in this geometric figure finds a symbol of the spiritual reality.[47]

Clark argues that this will be accentuated in an era when the spiritual has a greater reality than the natural:

If ideas are Godlike and sensations debased, then our rendering of
appearances must as far as possible be symbolic. . . .[48]

To the Middle Ages he attributes a particular aptitude for this style

which he describes as "the symbolizing faculty of the medieval mind."[49]

This symbolising seems only to require the brief evocation of

the natural world as a prelude to its argument. This is indicative

of the need to make 'signs' of natural objects. Since this is the fate

of the spring season in most medieval poems, this theme most clearly

illustrates the logic of sign-making.

The spring occupying the whole poem in "Sumer is i-cumen in"

and "Lenten ys come" becomes the nature induction in most poems. It

is condensed to the opening lines of the poem. There it is sketched

in with significant objects as if spring were sufficiently established

by the formula of blossoms breaking out upon the briar and of birds

singing their songs:

> Somer is comen wiþ loue to toune,
> Wiþ blostme, and wiþ brides roune. (1-2)

"The Thrush and the Nightingale" (Oxford, 52) begins as a prelude to a

bird debate. The words

> Bytuene Mersh ant Aueril
> When spray biginþ to springe,
> þe lutel foul haþ hire wyl
> On hyre lud to synge.   (1-4)

are a preface to the love theme in "Alysoun" (Harley, 4). This is

also true of "A Love Message"

> When þe nyhtegale singes þe wodes waxen grene,
> Lef & gras & blosme springes in aueryl, y wene,
>   (1-2)

The spring words

> Nu yh she blostme sprynge,
> hic herde a fuheles song,   (1-2)

can also become an opening to a declaration of love for Christ in "A

Spring Song of Love to Jesus" (Oxford, 63). Indeed as the poet implies

in "A Spring Song on the Passion" (Harley, 18), another rendering of

the same theme when "y se blosmes springe/ ant here foules song,"

then spring has occurred. This is indeed like a formula in that once

the full demonstration has been made through use of these 'topoi'

Curtius has elucidated, and once this demonstration has been validated

in poems like "Lenten ys come," then only the equation 'birds and

flowers equal spring' is needed.

As Dvorak claims, what has occurred here is a "legitimately

progressive simplification"[50] that results in "abbreviated forms:"

> . . . which are not arbitrary symbols but result rather from a
> systematic reduction of their objective thought and matter.[51]

Thus, as Henderson claims,

> Fragments only of nature were scrutinized and painstakingly
> recorded: . . .[52]

These fragments are not haphazard however, but a result of that syste-

matic reduction that produces a formula. This reduction may also relate

to the role the natural world plays in the effort to perceive the

divine, for it is not "real situations" but "the 'what' to be demon-

strated"[53] that is important, as Dvorak argues. Nature has been reduced

to those objects which sufficiently demonstrate the significant "what":

> Trees are only intimated by means of a few leaves, buildings by a few
> conspicuous structural elements.

Springtime is proved by its flowers and birds. This means that the
"inner discipline" of the natural world requires a logic of selection.
In this "systematic reduction"[55] the meaning of the code is revealed.
As each detail functions "as an abbreviation of reality,"[56] so these
abbreviations become "a type of hieroglyphics"[57] which finally expose
the natural world for what it is, a language for the spirit.

It is by these means that the lily which has been a sign of
the natural world becomes in its 'skeleton' a symbol of that order,
and as a symbol becomes a means of insight into the divine. "The
Lily with Five Leaves" (Oxford, 19) is introduced with the flower
that figures in the spring landscape--"Ful feir flour is þe lilie"
(1)--but it is an introduction to a spiritual content, the virtue of
"charite" (5), to "louen þin louer" (6), "þe broþir" (10), the christian,
and the virtues of righteousness and serving Christ. The link between
the natural flower and its use as a symbol arises from the number five
which is another code for spiritual content. This number, which in a
companion poem (Oxford, 18), is a property of the five joys of Mary, is
here a property of the leaves of the lily. These thereby become symbols
and, in a swift transition, effected by superimposing the two codes of
natural object and number, become a means of ordering the spiritual
world. Yet the likeness remains one that could give rise to pictorial
representation. But it would be understood that the leaves of that
flower, although taking natural shape, no longer had the meaning of the
flower, but of the virtues it represented, counted off leaf by leaf.
As Clark observes:

. . . the symbolizing habit of mind gives to their regard an unusual
intensity; for they look at flowers and trees not only as delightful
objects, but as prototypes of the divine.[58]

The logic working in poems such as "Lenten ys come" and "Annot and

John" makes the natural or human world into something like the pattern

of a medieval tapestry. The character both poems and tapestry share

is of an "ornamentally embellished surface."[59] The "embellishment" is

the logic which makes the pattern of the surface to which the natural

world has been reduced in both poem and tapestry.

The flat surface is one in which scenery is "considerably more

unified and regulated."[60] This can be seen in "Lenten ys come" where,

if the "dales and dounes" were superimposed, there would be an identity

of 'form' despite an irregularity of contour. This is not a natural

world which might be walked into but one which is scrupulously observed

like a map. However, this medieval map is not designed to give an

orientation in the natural world but an orientation in the spiritual

world through the surface pattern of nature. Thus to the poem, as

to the painting and the tapestry, the "character of a surface decoration"

means that they are all, physically, "utterly devoid of the reproduction

of spatial depth."[61] This lack is deliberate however and its motive is

spiritual.

In a definition of beauty St. Thomas Aquinas calls the spirit the

"splendor of the substantial and actual form":

It must be said that the notion of beauty includes several elements,
namely splendor of the substantial and actual form, plus external parts
proportionate to and terminated by the matter.[62]

The natural world which the human inhabits is the terminating "matter."

It defines and limits the spirit or "substantial" form within our mortal world. As a result, the material world must be deciphered if the Christian hope of final fitness for the spiritual world is to be achieved. It is the pattern which helps realise the decoding of the material world, for it provides the logic or scheme which, in that it is ordered and meaningful, can be read and understood. It is therefore, the "meaningful arrangement"[63] of lines, words and surfaces, which will reveal the ideal and the spiritual.

Joseph Frank in "Spatial Form in Modern Literature" argues that this style, which "abandons the three-dimensional world and returns to the plane,"[64] arises "when the relationship between man and the universe is one of disharmony and disequilibrium. . . ."[65] It is the linear form or the decorative pattern which cure this disharmony, for these patterns or forms "have the stability, the harmony and the sense of order which primitive man cannot find in the flux of phenomena. . . ."[66] This is clearly related to the search for the "inner discipline"[67] of natural objects in that the discipline provides "order." The purpose of this "order" is to find stability in the midst of confusion.

This suggestion is however but one aspect of the argument about the elimination of spatial depth, which occurs also, Frank claims, in times when the religion "completely rejects the natural world;"[68] that is, when matter is conceived simply as a termination, or reduction to limitation of the spirit. In this case the 'plane' or 'flat surface' is a means of eliminating mass and corporeality. The flat surface, not only in its unifying character but also in its rejection of the volume

and mass of mortal objects, their "object"-ivity, is also a means of approaching the higher order.

Rowland sees this effort to achieve the spiritual in the non-corporeality of medieval statues. Not only do the "flying buttresses and pinnacles" which "point to heaven" express "the loftiness of religious thought," but also the statues are "elongated to fit the general vertical pattern of the cathedral."[69] Rowland claims that the "almost geometric" "pattern of their garments" and their "uniform" postures do not reproduce real people but figures who "symbolise the soul of Christianity."[70] In Dvorak's words, this "verticalism" or "subtle slenderness" also functions "as an expression of victory by spiritual forces over material constraint."[71] This spiritual victory is, Dvorak claims, the "very essence of a divinely animated beauty" to the medieval imagination and it is not, therefore, by "mere chance" that the "highest and purest embodiment" of this beauty is "the Virgin Mother of God."[72]

This "vertical pattern" and "uniformity of posture" can certainly be seen in the human figure of the lady in that she is slender and tapering and white, as in her numerous pictorial representations, and also in that "midel smal" (Harley, 4, 16) and the "skin whittore þan þe swon" (Harley, 4, 28) of the poems. This is found equally in the stylized pose that she assumes, graceful and immobile, for decoration and not for embracing. Through these aspects she also achieves an air of "otherworldliness which defeats mass and corporeality."[73]

The lack of spatial depth in the Gothic "language" does not deny an impression of depth. This is again a result of the otherworldly focus. For the other space in medieval art is the divine space of eternity. This is the higher, truer order which disciplines the 'plane' world of finite objects and bodies.

With the groups of saints, as with the spring features and jewels, a harmony is achieved, Dvorak argues, by presenting the objects "as though magically transfixed" in a space where there is no "terminating, formal limitation."[74] Thus the listing of the spring features reduces them to a pattern which, in that it is logical and a series, can be continued ad infinitum. That is, the patterning has solved the terminating properties of matter which have limited flower, lady, jewel, or the soul, to the natural world. This is the logic provided for spring which relieves that season of the contrariness, flux and finiteness of its mortal form.

Full observation of the natural world, its localities and temporal being, has discovered its pattern, its discipline. The effect of this pattern is to release the natural world from the conditions of time and place. The logic and the form are eternal and of heaven. This sense of the eternal explains what Sypher perceives as "These intensely felt local relationships and anecdotes, seen from the perspective of eternity . . . ."[75] It is by discovering the logic of 'forms' that there is in medieval art and poetry a "union in time and eternity," in both "terrestrial mutability and celestial permanence."[76]

Thus the courtly style above all in its "surface pattern which

equates flags with clouds, lithe animals with gorgeously dressed men"[77] has, with great technical skill rendered leaves and flowers in all their individual entity as part of a decorative pattern. But its purpose in so doing is to enable them to take part in a "sacred dialogue."[78]

All medieval patterns have a third dimension therefore, although it is not concrete. The natural world's third dimension is spiritual. It is Heaven. In the same way the medieval lady is not a three-dimensional figure but a flat surface decorated with the properties of beauty and belovedness. Her third dimension is psychological and moral, love. Again the jewels which represent her preciousness are not mobile. They cannot be taken from their context, a context such as the pattern of "Annot and John." They are not, therefore, tactile, objects to be held in the hands in all their volume. They are defined most frequently by their shining which is a property of surface rather than of depth, which requires shadow. Their third dimension, therefore, is light.

The discovery of the patterns of the natural world becomes the means by which mankind is "borne aloft into a world of purely spiritual events and substances."[79] The knowledge presented in the pattern is perceived by the intellect which acts as an instrument for the spirit. The work of both intellect and spirit is to establish the essential 'form' which is contained within mutable natural objects. Thus the finite material 'termination' of the spiritual, this natural world, is used as a means to perceive the 'essence.' The realistic shape of nature itself becomes an image, an image of the 'ideal' which is itself an

aspect of the spiritual.

The inner 'essence' of the natural world is discovered in its springtime. One motive for this is that springtime represents eternity as the previous chapter implied. But a further reason is found in that springtime is love-time. Love acts in the world of ideal forms as a means not only of personal relations between man and woman, but also as an image of the assumption of the finite and material into the divine. For love is the supreme property of God and characterises his relation with humanity. Therefore, as all inner disciplines must be "manifested" the lovetime must also be "manifested" through a "system of thought"[80] which will reveal its logic.

As has been suggested, the love the medieval world inherited was, in spiritual terms, an ambiguous donation, since it retained its popular licentious character which gave it an "essence" not always adaptable to the spirit. Yet the medieval world speedily selected and accentuated that kind of love which is an image of the ideal. "Alysoun" (Harley, 4) is an example of the system at work and also suggests what might be called the 'form' of love.

The "system" as applied to the spring poems produces in "Alysoun" an instant total picture, if in miniature: "Bytuene Mersh ant Aueril" (time) (1), "when spray biginneþ to spring" (flowers) (2), "þe lutel foul haþ hir wyl/ on hyre lud to synge" (Birds and song) (3-4). The connection between this totality and the great unity of love is effected in the singing for thus the bird "haþ hir wyl" (3) and thenceforward they, like the poet "libbe in loue-longinge" (5). This "wyl" (3), perhaps

more allied again to the popular song which remains a "derne roune"
("Lenten ys come" 29) in most of these poems, becomes more conventionally
medieval in the phrase "loue-longing" (5). In these words the personal
love of the lovers is able to seek its own anonymous "form." This "love-
longinge" (5) is the "essence" to which all such loves as in "Alysoun"
subscribe. I hope to discuss this essence and the reasons for it later.
Its definition however again depends on 'systematising,' largely by means
of two principals; the lady and the lover's mood.

It is in the lady that the transition from the popular to medieval
love is effected, from the dark or secret to the open or purified song.
The lady's name, Alysoun, gives her an identity, but this identity is
particularised further in an extensive enumeration and articulation of
her physical characteristics; her "browe broune," "eʒe blake" (14),
"lossum chere" that "loh" (15), a "middel" "smal ant wel ymake" (16)
and a "swyre" "whittore þan þe swon" (28). Yet these so personal details
are, in truth, impersonal. These are particulars included in most songs
about ladies, waist, brows, eyes, neck, complexion and face:

> hyren eyʒen aren grete ant gray ynoh;
> þat lossum, when heo on me loh,   (16-17)

and "heo haþ a mete myddel smal" (73) or "swannes swyre swyþe well
ysette" (43). This is "The Fair Maid of Ribblesdale" (Harley, 7)
whose outline is also personally detailed. But she shares with Alysoun
and with the lady in "A Whayle Whyt Ase Whalles Bon" (Harley, 9) and in
"Blow, Northerne Wind" (Harley, 14), similar features that relate her
to a unity of medieval womanhood, anonymous in that they express the

essence of being beloved. Though they can be separated and named their identity no more retrieves them from their essential species than does the rose that "rayle͟s" (13) become just an individual rose. All these ladies belong to a single "logical level" that makes them a "type"[81] and a type that appears consistently throughout the Middle Ages. The unity they represent in this spring scene is that which is loved in spring-time, and that which makes humanity part of the essence of the season. This is a purified essence that has defeated those women who still sing the "derne rounes" that find their way even into "Lenten ys come." As with the natural world, the lady has been discovered by a logic which controls her human mortal form.

Love is the reason for the emergence of the "lady" in the courtly poem for she gives 'form' to love. She not only embodies love in its physical and finite sense, but also expresses that love which is a spiritual grace. This latter is a grace she can bestow upon others. Therefore she is the realisation also of love as a relationship from which love gains the moral and social forms of chivalry and courtly love. These are codes presided over by the lady who is the arbiter of their civility. By making the lady a symbol of the ability to relate, the poet makes her the goal of his search for love, the prize of the quest. Yet because she represents 'form,' the lady is impersonal. Therefore she is primarily intellectually adored by the poet, for his purpose is to recognise the love she represents. Since she is the principle of relationship rather than relationship itself, she is never to be won. She is not so much loved or lovable as a splendid exposition of the

means of relating. This is the lady the Middle English secular lyric attempts to create although it never achieves the impersonality of the Continental style.

The patterned presentation is used again with the lover's mood and with similar effect and purpose. This mood can be seen in "Alysoun" (Harley, 4). His "wonges waxeþ won" (23), for "wowing" makes him "al forwake" (31) so that he spends his "nihtes" "wende ant wake" (22). He finds that the "longinge" (25) of love to which he is committed in this springtime means "þolien", to suffer (35). Again these are personal properties in that this lover is experiencing them now, but they are also universal in that this is the experience of all lovers in the dales and downs of such a spring. These characteristics are again representative of the lover's behaviour as it occurs throughout troubadour song. It is, in this Middle English poem, defined not only in its specific parts as weariness, wanness, sleeplessness but also in its totality as love-longing. The essential 'form' that the lover's mood reflects is the ability to relate to his lady who is herself the principle of being beloved. This completes the 'essence' of relationship inherent in the medieval theme of love.

Beyond the lady and the lover there lies love itself. This love is of two kinds, the human, and that love of which human love is only a symbol, divine love. This divine love is also another aspect of relationship by love, for Christianity requires relationship with God by love. From this need arises the projection of a feminine content into the Divinity. The lady as Virgin Mary, becomes spiritual and then

represents relationship with the supreme form of love, the love of God. This is the quest of the religious poet in the Middle Ages and he approaches Mary as lady, as the secular poet approaches the courtly lady. That is, Mariolatry is almost obligatory in the intellectual structure of the Middle Ages as a means of arriving at essential 'form.'

However, spring is also a language of the spirit and its signs are used for more than the human love-time and the divine form achieved through that human relationship. It also enables man to see the mortal world from the "perspective of eternity."[82] By discussing two of these 'signs,' jewels and daytime, I hope to demonstrate the divine 'perspective' revealed in the surface logic of the spring of the natural world.

The lady is woven into the texture of the spring season not only by the language of flowers, but also by the jewels which indicate the preciousness that is a characteristic of all spring features. Thus in "Annot and John" jewels can be worked into the text as an 'object' characterisation of that which is precious. But this quality can be symbolic and the symbol translates the objects so that jewels can become an insight into the divine. This they do in a later medieval poem Pearl where the lady and the jewel are one in their spiritual being:

> A pyʒt coroune ʒet wer þat gyrle
> Of mariorys & non oþer ston,
> Hiʒe pynakled of cler quyt perle,
> Wyth flurted flowre perfet vpon.
> To hed hade ho non oþer werle;
> Her hede leke, al hyr vmbegon,
> Her semblaunt sade for doc oþer erle,
> Her ble more blaʒt þen whalleʒ bon,
> As schorne gold schyr her fax þenne schon,

> On schyldere þat leghe vnlapped lyȝte.
> Her depe colour ȝet wonted non
> Of precios perle in porfyl pyȝte.[83]

The verse evokes other associations already established, by means of abbreviation, the figured flowers, the "whiter than whalebone," the marvellous whiteness, but all are subsumed in the identification of maiden and pearl. While "Annot and John" (<u>Harley</u>, 3) and <u>The Pearl</u> represent two extremes of the use of jewels, as object and symbol, the "derewurþe gemme" (<u>Oxford</u>, 43, 163) is fitted into many medieval poems as a property of the lady. I hope later to suggest these other connections which will allow jewels to take a more "essential" place in the spring "system of reference."

The choice of daytime as a setting for spring is as an extension of the properties of the season. Obviously spring is a better time for the observation of flowers and birds. Yet the choice seems to be more than a simple case of poetic mechanics. A poet such as Keats can, in "The Ode to a Nightingale,"[84] evoke similar vernal suggestions at dark of night through feel and smell. This distinction emphasises the strongly visual approach of the medieval poet who needs brightened objects. It is also obvious from the contrast with the preceding Anglo-Saxon poetry, that the choice of daytime is deliberate and that the motive for it is emotional. Night is used in the Old English elegy but mainly because it evokes darkness, for night is a prime means of conveying darkness. Yet the "The Wife's Lament" can be set in early dawn for the "dena dimme"[85] that crowds in upon the Wife sets a darkened mood as effectively. The medieval nature induction rejects these crowding shadows which are

as much emotional as physical, for it consistently avoids night. That
is, light is the elimination of shadow and the emotions associated with
it, and to the Middle Ages the season of spring is welcome not only as
a season of love but also of a daytime. The constant assertion of day
in the medieval spring is the election of a season of light.

It is this light that gives the new world its sights by bringing
them sharply into focus. The words for light expand into many
variations of vocabulary and theme in the medieval poem. Light is a
property of women as the nightingale claims in "The Thrush and the
Nightingale" (Oxford, 52),

> Hy beþ briʒttore ounder shawe
> þen þe day wenne hit dawe
> In longe someres tide. (124-126)

which neatly works in both daylight and spring. But brightness is a
recurrent feature of the medieval lady as is stressed in "Blow Northerne
Wind" "Ichot a burde in boure briht" (Oxford, 14, 5), the poet says,
"þat brid so breme in boure" (17) and "Hire lure lumes liht" (23). It
also becomes a property of the Virgin in the "lauedi brit" (38) of both
"The Prayer of Penitence" (Oxford, 32) and "The Five Joys" (Oxford, 18, 1),
or, as in "A Light is Come into the World" (Oxford, 24):

> Lauedi, flur of parradise,--
> Nis neuir non so scene -- (90.92)

Light is also that which signifies that Mary has been assumed into the
spiritual world: "Briht and scene quen of houene" (Oxford, 55,21). It
is also used to define Christ, physically, as in the clever turn from the
natural world to the spiritual in Thomas of Hale's "Love Ron" (Oxford, 43).

In this poem Paris and Helen who were "so bryht & feyr on bleo" (66)

give way to the "treowe king" (88) who is nevertheless also "feyr &

bryht on heowe" (91). In "Stod ho þere Neh" (<u>Oxford</u>, 4), light describes

the miracle of Christ's birth:

> For, so gleam glides þurt þe glas
> of þi bodi born he was, (34-35)

In the "Love Ron," it becomes a characteristic of heaven where the maid

will "some & sauhte in heouene lyht" (133).

Light is consciously used as the property of day, which is then

used to reveal the greater brightness either of the human lady who "be

briʒttore" (124) "þen þe day wenne it dawe" (125) (<u>Oxford</u>, 52); or of

the spiritual lady, Mary, in "Of One that is so Fair & Bright" (<u>Oxford</u>,

17) who is "bristore þen þe dai-is list" (4). This day is equally

consciously a non night time. From this rejection of night it makes a

formula for itself, the 'day-without-night' hieroglyphic, occurring in

varying settings: as the time in heaven, which "The God Ureisun"

(<u>Oxford</u>, 3) offers, the "dei wiþ-ute nihte" (59). It is characteristic

of Christ, for in the "Love Ron" (<u>Oxford</u>, 43) "he is day wyþ-vte nyhte"

(142) and again in "Swete Ihesu King of Bliss" (<u>Oxford</u>, 50) "þou art

dai wiþ-houten niʒt" (6). In this poem the hieroglyphic is developed

further. Christ is such a day because he is "herte liʒt" (5). Here

lies the spiritual "substance" of light, that which is "liues leome."

This light of the life and of the heart is a spiritual newness, rising

from that darkness of night that has been dispelled by the new light.

This is made explicit in "A Song to the Queen of Heaven" (<u>Oxford</u>, 60):

> þu asteȝe so þe daiȝ-rewe,
> þe deleð from þe deorke nicht,
> of þe sprong a leome newe
> þat al þis world haueð iliȝt.   (9-12)

Thus the light of spring is brought from a new source to irradiate the whole natural world, and this makes it 'daylight.' Now in this day the "bricht and scene quen of storre" (29) will "liht and lere" (29) "in þis false fikele world" (30) according to "A Prayer to the Mother of Mildness" (Oxford, 55). Therefore, light has become a character of that "inner discipline" which demonstrates the logic of the spirit and the infinite within the finite world in flux, the "false fikele world" (30). The source of this logic is God Himself for the light that has come into the world is his Resurrection:

> On leome is in þis world ilist,
> þer-of is muchel pris;
> a-risen is god . . .   (Oxford, 24, 1-3)

This rising is the new day. The light thus clarifying the whole world of natural objects and of the human life is primarily the light of the spirit, the "eche liht" (Oxford, 55,20) of "A Prayer to the Mother of Mildness"; a light which is translated into the light of spring day but never forgets its true source, which makes it the light of endless day.

The theme of light also makes logic of the use of jewellery, for it is in the brightness they reflect from their clear surfaces that they become a sign of preciousness. Thus in "Annot and John" the first three descriptions end in "bryht," "syht" and "lyht" (Harley, 3, 1-3). They also, therefore, are a source of light. Thomas of Hales uses this aspect of jewellery to relate it to a spiritual content when talking of

the virtue that will fit the maiden for heaven, chastity. He describes this virtue as a "gemme," "ymstone" (<u>Oxford</u>, 43, 163, 175) and of it he says "he schyneþ so bryht in heouene bur" (184). Thus jewels, and their light dimension, have found a moral content.

Jewels also indicate the light typical of medieval spring. Rarely, except in "Sumer is i-cumen in" (<u>Oxford</u>, 6) does it seem to be the rich light of high summer which becomes as much heat and energy as light, and easily identifies itself with passion. This other light is, like that of the jewels, cooler, that of freshness, of dawn or spring. It is distinguished most of all by its clarity which brings the new spring into sharp focus. This clarity is precise enough in its outlining of objects to illuminate the skeleton required to make those objects signs of the "inner discipline" of the natural world. The peak of this light is radiance and at this point it gains a divine dimension as "eche liht" (<u>Oxford</u>, 55, 20). It then becomes the kind of brightness which enables mortal eyes to perceive transcendent form. It is in this capacity to reveal the divine that light becomes the goal of the system, the meaning, or clarification, of the logic.

In discussing this medieval pursuit of essential 'form,' I have confined myself mainly to the topic of springtime since this is the most frequent medieval version of the natural world, and also because the themes of love and the lady are allied to this season. Throughout I have suggested that the Middle Ages use the intellect, through either pattern or logic, upon natural and human forms. By so doing what I describe as the medieval system is created. I have implied that this

system becomes symbolic in that its primary concern is not the natural world but the spiritual world contained within nature and humanity. The system or logic is an attempt to decode this spiritual content of nature. In so far as it is successful it becomes symbolic. This may be seen in the emotional and social as well as the religious spheres.

It is this pursuit of the logic or system in an effort to discover the spirit which distinguishes the Middle English lyric from its predecessor. This distinction is even more heavily emphasised in the goal of the system which is the synthesis or what I prefer to call the 'clarification,' at this stage. It is the aim not only of the religious but also of the secular code to provide a resolution of conflict and an explication of the patterns and logic which have propounded and exposed this conflict. I see the basic goal of this resolution whether in the secular or the religious lyric, as spiritual.

I would stress, however, that the largely 'imported' medieval style is but clumsily applied in the Middle English lyric. I wish therefore, in the succeeding chapter, only to suggest the possible clarification sought by this style in the Middle Ages. It is useful to provide this since it outlines the principles being used and some of the motives for using them. It should be kept in mind that these principles and motives are only attempted in the thirteenth century English lyric, although many of them could be seen in fruition at a later date.

CHAPTER IX

CLARIFICATION

Throughout the discussion of argument in Chapter VII and codes in Chapter VIII I have implied that the struggle of irreconcileables presumes a resolution. When the struggle is carried to its limit in the natural world, spring wins a victory and thereby gains control of the natural world. This is, however, only a solution not a resolution, for it is a victory gained by rejection. This is no more than the medieval starting point. The final victory of the spring scene is won, however, not through its role as part of a pair, but because spring belongs already to a higher order and wields the authority of that order. It is by its transcendence of the natural world into the divine that spring truly defeats winter.

The resolution of conflict therefore, lies in spring in that, by being a right choice, a 'sic' containing within its own lineaments the divine pattern, it has provided a supernatural logic for the natural world which means that that world can transcend its own sensual, wintry being. That is, the argument is always constructed from a recognition of the 'sic' to which the 'non' must be supplied only as a demonstration of the proof of the ultimate 'yes.'

The final resolution is, therefore, that which orders all existence, which makes all contrary to it a 'non.' This resolution is apparent in the Middle English lyric in the lady and virgin and in the spring scene, in which latter the natural and supernatural worlds are most subtly related in that the spring becomes Paradise, an

eternal place. But all these are only images of the dominant resolution of the medieval vision, the divinity which is the order of all. In passing into this higher order, resolution is called more properly clarification.

To argue the case for the medieval 'clarification' governing all the systems apparent in the previous chapter, I have relied upon a variety of critical sources. These mainly relate to the continental version of 'clarification.' This is necessary because it is on the Continent that the new culture from which the Middle English lyric is derived, is being formed. The work I have used mainly is a study of the lyric poetry of Provence, and of the effects of the Provençal tradition in Germany and Italy, The Mirror of Narcissus by Frederick Goldin. Such a study is relevant to the Middle English lyric in that it is the Continental influence on the English lyric I wish to isolate and this influence stems from Provence. Goldin's reliance on Augustine and Plotinus to explain his argument is invaluable in that it detects the sources of the continental medieval lyrical stance in an immediately post-classical era early in the Southern European Dark Ages. This work does not, therefore, assume that the style of the medieval lyric is a surprising flowering in 1100 but that that style is a development traceable to the origins of medieval culture as a whole, and particularly to Augustine with his ultimate and 'revolutionary' connection with the classical world.

The images Goldin uses to effect this study, the mirror and the figure of Narcissus, offer a perceptive approach to this medieval lyrical

stance. Narcissus suggests a poet much preoccupied with himself and his own reflection in his material, a trend fundamentally lyrical as I perceive the lyric: as a statement of the 'I,' the private person. But the image of Narcissus also presumes an exclusive preoccupation with that 'I,' which suggests a major distinction between the medieval lyric poet and his Old English forbear. Such a preoccupation makes the 'image' of the mirror a provocative definition of medieval culture, not only in that the mirror holds the reflections of the lyrical 'I' but also in that it is an impenetrable surface engaging the poet in a reflected or illusory world rather than with the physical or social environment as an objective reality. In addition, the mirror can be associated readily with the dream, a means of perception which seems to dominate later medieval English literature in <u>Pearl</u>, <u>Piers Plowman</u> and early Chaucerian poetry. The dream vision can also be detected in the spring idyll, in the image of the lady and in the mystic poem. These are associations which it is not to my purpose to pursue fully, but the recurrent medieval dreaming condition will, I hope, substantiate my position at certain points.

The Narcissus figure, preoccupied with his own psyche and its reflections, lends itself to the arguments of a psychologist like Jung, who shows a decided interest in literature and in the Middle Ages. Jung, and another psychologist whose work applies to literature, Otto Ranke, are particularly useful in defining the relationship between the male 'persona' of the lyric poet and his obsession with the lady, the ceaseless subject of lyrical poetry in the Middle Ages. I have used both to

provide some suggestion as to the role the lady is playing, not only in

the poet's psyche but in medieval culture as a whole. This thereby

provides some definition of love which is the basis of the psychic

liaison between poet and lady. I have also used J. B. Morrall's _Medieval_

Imprint: The Founding of the Western Tradition as an historical reference

since this work discusses the relation of personality to the growth

of Christianity, a link which is relevant to the lyrical 'I' and

the culture in which this grows. This is a study which again concen-

trates on the post-classical era in which the Middle Ages originate,

and discusses the task the Dark Ages set themselves, also relating this

task both to Rome and to Augustine.

Clarity is related to form as Aquinas explains:

The form of everything, through which the thing has its being, parti-
cipates in some manner in divine clarity.[1]

He relates beauty to clarity in that it has the property of light and

thereby becomes perfected 'form':

It is the cause of the harmony and splendour in all things, flashing
forth upon them all, like light, the beautifying communications of
Its originating ray . . . .[2]

This clarity is derived from spiritual insight in that it is ultimately

the property of divinity:

God is said to be beautiful and the cause of the harmony and clarity
of all things. . . .[3]

But clarity is also a part of that logic which works on all

material and spiritual phenomena. When logic has rendered intelligible

"the spiritual nucleus of the composition"[4] to the human mind it has

brought clarity. It is this principle that Aquinas' _Summa_ itself

represents: "from summary to _Summa_ as we know it, until the final lustra

of the twelfth century."[5] These 'summa' are but one aspect of that

clarifying which is divine and which requires the effort of the Middle

Ages "to make the orderliness and logic of their thought palpably

explicit." This Panofsky terms "clarification for clarification's

sake."[6] This is the operation which transforms the sight of the world

of matter into insight into the world of the spirit in the Middle Ages.

Thus when the signs of light and jewels are used in a poem such as

Pearl to irradiate the vision of the City of God then illumination

becomes revelation. It reveals the immortal and divine to the natural

world. This is the ultimate intention of clarification.

The image used to present clarification is light. The essence

of light and its relevance to form both mortal and immortal is

indicated in the following observations:

Light is form, since it is admitted to the nave only after it has been
patterned by a colored network of stained glass windows. To what
realm, to what region in space do these structures, situated between
heaven and earth, and pierced through and through by light, belong?
The flat, but limitless expanse of the windows, their images, shifting,
transparent, disembodied, and yet firmly held in place by bands of lead
. . . all these like symbols of the eternal transfiguration forever at
work upon the forms of life and forever extracting from it different
forms for another life.[7]

Light also provides some form of what Herbert Read calls the

"integral dream,"[8] that psychic and spiritual content which has a

transfiguring but intangible being. This connection with the dream

returns to the logic required for medieval clarification. As Freud

says, when we become conscious of the dream, "we try to fill in the gaps,

we add connecting links" and this "rationalizing activity" provides "the

dream with a smooth façade."[9] This is the systematising, the rage for

method, of the Middle Ages. They do not seek the "innate" dream with

"all its gaps and inconsistencies."[10] Instead they intend to rationalize

it, not to reason it away but rather to provide a grammar for the dream

the new light has provided. This grammar has been apparent in all the

'language' of the Middle Ages. It is not sought for its own sake but

in order to define the 'form' of the transformed day world, as is seen

in the lines from "A Song to the Queen of Heaven."[11]

It is necessary to include this dreaming condition, so charac-

teristic of the medieval style, in this discussion of 'form,' and to see

this dream as initiated by the spiritual aspirations of the Middle Ages.

It is not the attachment to the divinity itself that gives rise to the

medieval dream state, but the fact that this attachment is basically

inward-looking or psychic in nature. This dependence upon the psychic or

spiritual results in the re-shaping, through the dream, of the outer

world. When the outer world is dependent upon an inward source, or

spiritual definition, for its existence, that outer world is deprived of

substance, for the psyche or soul does not then rely upon the senses.

Thus the outer world itself becomes a dream, a series of shadowy images

fleeting across the consciousness, as it is described by Thomas of Hales

in his "Love Ron."

The 'dream' relation to external reality is also definable by

the image of a mirror. The use of the mirror to describe the condition

of the dreamer can make precise the essential character of the relation-

ship with the outer world by dream. This is separation. It is separation

from an external reality which can no longer be perceived directly but only as a reflection on a spiritual glass. Fundamentally the glass which reflects the natural world is that spiritual truth which turns all objects in that world both into shadows without substance and also into images outlining a deeper reality, that of the spirit and of God. The mirror therefore indicates the effects of the intervention of the sacred into the life of experience in the Middle Ages. The actual environment was conceived by medieval man as a necessary aspect of their relationship with God, but they sought in that environment only that absolute purity of outline which is imparted by spiritual truth. Such a purity can be perceived in the mirror or dream of the natural world which makes the spiritual world visible to mortal man. I would therefore suggest that the image of the mirror is a useful way of comprehending the previous discussion on the "inner discipline" of the sacred reality, which the Middle Ages seek in the natural world; and it is also a useful way of comprehending the effects of this search upon the mind of medieval man, particularly in his role as lyric poet.

The mirror most obviously reflects the natural world. This reflection is defined by Plotinus as the "mirror of matter."[12] But this is a reflection which to the Middle Ages is decidedly a dream, or what Plotinus calls an "actuality of illusion."[13] These are fleeting images proper to a "vikel and frakel"[14] world which Goldin describes as "a beautiful shape playing over water."[15] It is easily recognisable as the world of transience which the Middle Ages continually seek to order and control. It is the finite mortal nature to which codes and

patterns are necessary. This is the mirror which is a trap to man

capturing him in flux and mortality. For this mirror, according to

Plotinus, reflects the "sorrow of generation"[16] where, as Goldin says:

The beauty of bodies, the justice of men, love defined in times and
places – these change, they pass away. . . .[17]

Therefore, this mirror defines the natural world and the senses, love,

community, place and human time all as properties of mortality and its

source, procreation, both of which express themselves as transience.

The resolution, even more than the codes, must set itself to cure all

of these by discovering the ultimate, stable and immortal order.

It can do this by means of the mirror condition also, for the

medieval mirror is a two-way glass which can act as a connective with

the spiritual reality for which the natural world is only a code. It

only requires the significant hieroglyphics to be selected, the signi-

ficant images to be outlined. Then the mirror's images offer a means of

interpreting the natural world as a language of the spirit. Otto Rank

discusses the search for a spiritual reality in Beyond Psychology seeing

it as an expression of man's will:

(God is not creation from fear but from will. It means that, I, man,
created the world! . . .[18]

The will which Rank detects as creating this world implies an increasing

dependence upon projection, interpretation and reason. In the Middle

Ages this can be seen in the increasing deciphering of the dream world

by the logic apparent in the scholastic and architectural codes referred

to earlier. It implies that the dream world must not only be projected

but controlled by the will of man. And this controlling will is directed

primarily at the most uncontrollable aspects of the world which is transcended in the spiritual reality. It is directed at the transience of the mortal world.

The natural world is truly descibed as an "inner discipline"[19] in the _Roman de la Rose_:

> Just as a mirror will reflect each thing
> That near is placed, and one therein can see[20]
> Both form and colour without variance. . . .

It is a world stilled and purified to a kind of essence, without the noise, dimension or sensual existence of experience. It is, therefore, a world created in images, disciplined by the one image of the gazer, the identity of the 'I' who perceives, and it is deciphered by his mental skills. Ultimately this world is contained only in the dreamer's own mind.

The mirror thus implies some search onward to a supernatural world beyond. Goldin claims that it is Augustine who instructs the Middle Ages about the spiritual world through the mirror by his pursuit of "the pure mirror of self-knowledge, the mirror of all-being"[21] derived from the "face of truth"[22] which is God. This is a truth imprinting itself on the spiritual side of the mirror. But this spiritual world is also that of the psyche, for it is reflected back into that which gazes at it from the natural world, the mind of the poet. Both that mind and the "face of truth"[22] are in opposition to that "mirror of matter"[23] the natural, sensual, secular world. The "mirror of matter" and its reflections, is therefore disciplined by a psychic spiritual relationship such as Augustine pursues. The soul of man is on one side; the truth of God, to which that soul seeks to relate itself, on the

other. When seen purely as a medium in this relationship, the natural world is no longer the "mirror of matter"[23] but is enabled to become a glass through which the light of God is made visible, in the same way that the human lady as Virgin becomes a glass for man, radiating the light of Christ when he is within her, as in the lyric, "Stod ho þere neh:" "For so gleam glidis þurt þe glas."[24]

This is a light however, which ultimately reduces the imprint of the natural world, of lover, lady and spring, as they are part of that world, to dead matter. For this 'matter' is ultimately a riddle which confuses, as in fact all codes must do, for they distort and distract, as Augustine says:

Now your word appears to us in the enigma of the clouds and by means of the mirror of heaven.[25]

Thus the imprint of the natural world deceives as to the true content of the mirror, that light of God which is not only 'all-being' but real being. There is a being and a place beyond the illusions of the natural world, and they have a direct and positive reality without need of those metaphors, symbols or systems required to represent it to the fleeting images of the natural world. This is what Augustine calls being "as it is."[26] The mirror can direct beyond the empty shapes of the natural world to an unambiguous existence which is that of the spirit and of God. This is the ultimate resolution, the divine principle ordering the finite reality.

However, as Augustine implies, this existence can never be unambiguous to the mortal gazer:

. . . however much we are loved by your son it has not yet appeared what we shall be.[27]

Nothing can take shape in the mirror for the inhabitants of this world without the imprint of this world of matter, for it is the material world which makes the spirit intelligible to mortal man. The mirror must, therefore, always confound the images of the spirit with deceptive, sensual reality. This is the problem that must be resolved.

This dual mirror, where sacred and natural are confounded, takes varying forms in medieval culture. Heaven is a two-way mirror being both the frame for the earth and also the home of God. The place that belongs to God is reflected back into the natural world as spring, the idyll of heaven. The same happens to the city which is a collection of buildings in the natural world but which in the spiritual reflection is the City of God, "the dwelling place of God,"[28] which imprint is reflected back upon the physical city to produce an ideal of a spiritual home for a community of men. The same happens to the lady whose being belongs to the natural world, but whose ideal form as the Virgin Mary reflects back on the lady making her also an embodiment of the ideal. Each object so translated becomes a mirror itself reflecting the spiritual reality back to the natural world. Thus the virgin and the beloved reflect back God and the ideal to the male kneeling in service before them. The ideals so projected must be discussed as properties of the resolution. The first to be elucidated will be the lady. This discussion will also suggest much of the 'technique' employed in seeking the final 'clarification.'

The making of a mirror of the lady also reveals the process required to make mirrors effective, be they lady, heaven, City or the poem. The effort of the deciphering poet must always be to negate the material aspects of the mirror so that it becomes progressively truer to its spiritual source. All that belongs to the living lady as a creature of the natural world, "every accidental quality, her name, her thoughts, her humanity"[29] must be suppressed. It is only then that she can become an immobile surface like the waters and the glass, to be gazed at and to reflect. He must constantly deprive her of any reality outside the ideal she reflects: "the lady herself has no reality except as a mirror."[30] To make mirrors effective, therefore, all links with the reality of the natural world must be negated. It is by this process that the culture acquires objects and concepts of the natural world as images of the spiritual. It is by this process that such images can be manipulated, or, in medieval terms, decoded.

Otto Rank in _Beyond Psychology_ argues that man uses the image of woman in this way and this, perhaps, points to some of the motives for idealizing woman in the Middle Ages. Rank claims that man's objective in so acquiring the image of woman arises from an opposition to woman as representative of procreative love, the "bearer of sexual mortality"[31] who finds "her immortality in sexual procreation."[32] Man, whose procreative role is "incidental and temporal,"

. . . never accepted this basic fact of being mortal, that is, never accepted himself.[33]

Thus man must assert for himself an identity by another means. He seeks this through a soul and its "immortality claim."[34] This claim is made

through the effort to "externalize himself personally"[35] or to make
himself visible to himself. This visible image he can find in the lady
when she is transformed from the mortal sexual being (who opposes this
effort). Thus the poet in suppressing "every accidental quality"[36] of
the lady, in particular her "humanity,"[36] suppresses the "bearer of
sexual mortality."[37] He so transforms the lady by the code of virginity
discussed in Chapter VII. He can then make of the lady a mirror in which
he sees a "localization of the ideal"[38] a representation in the natural
world of the spiritual reality which will make him visible.

The lady then becomes a mirror who reflects the poet, his own
mind and its contents. In her as a reflection of man, all man's images
of the natural world are made visible - that is she gives shape to the
image of spring. In this also lies the importance of the lover's mood,
as it was illustrated from "Alysoun," for the lady also makes known
the poet's own shape to him. She thereby also makes him visible to his
society, thus "every courtly man is made visible by her look."[39] For,
in meeting her needs and demands for service, he defines his social
status. Yet in this social code which reveals him to himself, he also
acts as a definition of social position. In that he is knight and
courtly lover he acts as a mirror for all that is courtly and knightly
in a society which seeks courtesy and knighthood as its "secular ideal."[40]
Therefore, the poet, as lover-knight, not only sees himself reflected
in his society, but also, as he becomes a model of what that society
expects, reflects that society itself. Therefore, the "knight's love
of the courtly ideal is the expression of his status as its image."[41]

The lady thus acts in the social world of the Middle Ages as well as
in the poet's private world.

By these means she becomes a mirror of the poet's own conscious-
ness, both public and personal:

She is his intelligence . . . the dream of his reality. Without her he
is unknowable, . . .[42]

In this sense the lady becomes a reflection of "My Lady Soul" whom Jung
calls the _anima_. This "personification of the unconscious"[43] is an
image which occurs along the path to self-knowledge. The necessity and
purpose of this embodiment lies in that it is "an image of all feminine
psychological tendencies in man's psyche."[44] according to M. L-von Franz
in _Man and his Symbols_. Discussing this _anima_ he refers specifically to
the Middle Ages claiming that:

The lady to whose service the knight pledged himself, and for whom he[45]
performed heroic deeds, was naturally a personification of the anima.

He also argues that the medieval _anima_ reaches its culmination in the
Virgin Mary, "a figure who raises love (eros) to the heights of spiritual
devotion."[46] Thus the _anima_ appears in _Pearl_ where, according to Jon
Whyte in _Pearl: A Study in Individuation_, she is the pearl maiden, who
is,

. . . the _anima_, the personification of the unconscious, "My Lady
Soul," and the benevolent guide to the further beauties of the realm
in which the dreamer finds himself.[47]

This "realm in which the dreamer finds himself" is his own self, for
the "self is usually encountered with the assistance of the anima,"[48]
and the _anima_ becomes a means to further self-knowledge, knowledge of
the 'dreamer's' own identity. Therefore, in this dream or mirror of

himself, the lady as <u>anima</u> takes on the "role of guide or mediator, to
the world within and to the self."[49]

This use of the mirror as "an instrument of self-contemplation"[50]
leads the poet to an inner life, a "world within,"[51] to which the lady
is a guide. Or, in other terms, it leads to the lover's mood which
dominates his perception of the beloved. This world is essentially
spiritual in content for the perfection of the lady as guide or mediator
is the Virgin Mary who "raises love (eros) to the heights of spiritual
devotion."[52]

Woman is an appropriate guide to this "world within" for, as
Rank claims, she is a being whose "psychology as a whole can be
designated as insideness,"[53] an insideness presumably derived from her
procreative role. Part of the attraction of the lady to the medieval
poet lies in this "woman's mystery that it is all invisible, inside."[54]
The Middle Ages need this image of woman as lady, not so much to control
her as to gain access to her for she is guide to her own "mystery."[55]
That "mystery" is the insideness that is invisible, which is necessary
both to the "inner life" of the poet's identity and also to the Christian
faith, with its exploration of the "world within" as spiritual reality.
Therefore, when the lady is used as a mirror, it is because of her
derivation from that procreative being of the natural world, in that she
originates in the "mystery"[55] of the living woman, however much she is
then suppressed into an "agent of his consciousness,"[56] a guide or mediator.
Then as a mirror she defines the "world within," as in the <u>Roman de la
Rose</u> where it is "enclosed and hid,"

> So there is nothing in the place so small
> Or so enclosed and hid but that it shows
> As if portrayed upon the crystal stones.[57]

But once this feminine mystery has been located in the natural world, the woman can be transformed into the ideal which still contains within it that "insideness"[58] proper to the feminine which is also necessary to the Christian world. Thus woman, who becomes the lady, eventually becomes "My Lady Soul." As she is 'Soul,' she connects with the spiritual and divine. As My Lady, she reflects the poet's identity, his "I."

Love is a necessary preliminary to this exploration inwards. It starts as the love which is a property of the world of matter since this is a means of relating to woman. But, to function properly as a guide to relation with her, love must also be neutralised. It must be detached from that mortal, procreative experience into a sublimated force beyond the "accidents" of humanity which are "defined in times and places."[59] By this means love can become a means of relating not to the woman but to the lady, who has become a "localization of the ideal."[60] It can, therefore, become a connective with the spiritual reality she represents and thus love, in its neutralised or idealised form, becomes a definition of all relationship within the cosmos.

However, its ultimate role is the relationship between God the Creator and his creatures. It thereby becomes a spiritual reality itself as a property of the Divine, the love of God. According to Rank in Beyond Psychology, this is also a result of the acquisition of the image of woman by man since man thereby takes over and controls

"woman-love" which belongs to the procreative being. He does so in order to re-interpret it in "terms of his masculine ideology."[61] This ideology takes over the love known in "times and places,"[62] the love known between the two objective realities of mortal procreative persons and develops from it instead an expression of the "immortality-claim"[63] of man's soul. Thus the use of love is not only related to the need for visibility of relationship and self, but is also spiritual in intent. As this "development of woman-love in relation to the man was made possible first by the Christian love-ideology"[64] love is made into the "Christian Agape."[64] Thus love has become "a condition of the inner life,"[65] thereby also making visible the identity of man and becoming a means of consciousness. In this sense it is another of those words, or logic, a Logos, which creates a "world within." This world is both the poet's inward identity and the spiritual reality.

By serving as images accelerating the masculine striving for identity love and woman make the Christian Romance community. This community meets the psychic and spiritual needs of its members in these images. So far the resolution has suggested that the cornerstone of medieval society is a spiritual reality which is also related to the inward principle of the "I." Of this inward principle the lady is the source and the structure of it is love.

But this identity is not only spiritual and psychic but social as well. Love and the lady truly strive for the realisation of the identity of the community, acting as the mirror of the social organization. This gives an extra dimension to the resolution or clarification

sought by the Middle Ages. It is not solely spiritual but also communal.

This is a necessity for in this period a new culture is being formed.

The Middle Ages are the first sure sign that the long-awaited civili-

sation, sought throughout the Dark Ages, is being formulated. Frings

suggests that this is a major influence in the development of Frauenlied

into courtly love lyric:

The south wind blows ever stronger in this early love poetry, to bring
the spirit of a new society and a new art from the courts of Provence.[66]

This society has been reflected upon throughout the Dark Ages and in

that period the hopes of the emergence of this society have been bred,

and its principles established. To its development Augustine is again

important. It is his work that according to Morrall

. . . had the outcome of dissolving in the Christian mind the assumption
that the civilization could not survive without the continued existence
of Rome. . . .[67]

and it was he who was revolutionary enough to

. . . spell out the concrete possibility of at least a modus vivendi
between Christianity, civilization and the barbarian successor States
to the Empire. . . .[68]

This possibility described by Morrall returns to the definition of the

Middle Ages provided by Ker that here at last Germania is "harmonised" in

"the new conception of Christendom."[69] The extra concept provided by

Augustine is that this harmonisation will provide a civilisation, and

one which is to be, in Morrall's words "an organism which included all

members of the Western European community."[70] This is the secular

resolution.

A community established in the natural world must necessarily be

secular, but Augustine has provided the only hope for this new civili-
sation through the establishment of a sacred goal, a new Rome as a
City of God. This hope reflects back upon the secular community first
of all, for although, as Morrall claims,the "Christian Commonwealth
of the Middle Ages was neither exclusively a State nor a Church,"[71]
nevertheless the "necessity of a true Commonwealth to be Christian"
lead to its being interpreted to mean "the dependence of all secular
authority on the Church."[71] With such effects in the political, or
more purely secular, realm, it is hardly surprising that the "new
conception of Christendom"[72] should have an even more decided influence
over the philosophic and artistic aspects of this community, realms
where the ambivalence of sacred and secular is more pronounced.

The need for this community in art, and its ambivalence, can be
detected in the architecture of the period not only in the image of
the City of God which the cathedral made visible but also in the
representation of human beings within this structure. Rowland in
The Shapes We Need argues for this, referring to the saints "elongated
to fit the general vertical pattern of the cathedral and to become
part of the structure" the purpose being to indicate

The comparative unimportance of the individual and the overwhelming
importance of the community, both religious and civic.[73]

This predominance of the community can also be detected in the social and
emotional sphere.

A new vocabulary of joy and pain develops, full of subtle gradations;
of wishing and weening, of longing, desiring striving and granting;
of service in love (Minnedienst) of praise of love, of love's merci.
Around the words Amor-Minne a whole field of words springs up, which
extends from the

most refined nobility of soul to the most contemptible felony. Womanly
beauty as expressed in words; grace, witchery; exalted, coquettish,
lovable feminine behaviour. *Cortezia* is *hovescheit*, *onor* is *ere* and
tugent, *beltat e bontat* is *schoene unde gerate*; all vocabulary develop-
ments which circumscribe outer and inner appraisals of human worth.
But the ethical mother of all these terms is *amor*, the German *Minne*,
which, out of sympathetic consideration becomes the watchword of a
society.[74]

Thus love and the lady as related to the poet become watchwords for a

society. For this comprehensive language of Europe, which can be

paralleled in Italian, and in the later Chaucerian English of 'gentil-

lesse' and courtesy, is clearly related to society and social behaviour

and standing. Courtesy is allied both to 'courtly love' and also to the

actual 'court.' The behaviour of courtly love is also closely allied

to chivalry. Chivalry is a social principle which is developed from the

feudal relationship. The intimacy of these is seen in the use of feudal

language to define the love relationship:

The language of feudal obligation is used in both sides of this suitor-
mistress relationship; lovers exchange vows on the pattern of the feudal
oath; the lover even does homage to his mistress as if she were his
feudal overlord.[75]

'My Lady' has truly moved into the centre of the complex of social rela-

tionships as did the Virgin in "God Ureisun," taking the place of the

"frynd" 'My lord.'

The motive of this spiritualised medieval secular resolution seems

to be primarily a quest for form. This is reflected in the continual experi-

menting with verse forms and in the coinage of a language which itself makes

a social pattern, "an artificial society language"[76] Frings calls it. This

form in language can also be seen in the definition of the vernacular

languages by each other and by the standard of Latin, that is, in the

tutoring of Italian by the Provençal tongue, and in the macaronic

verses in Middle English. In language and verse the underlying motive

seems to be to discover the basic rhythms of the new vernaculars

arising from the Romance-Germanic liaison.

Moore in The Secular Lyric has traced this search for form in

Middle English. He moves from the early songs of the Harley MS where

the ladies and springs of a real world can still be perceived in the

formulas of the poems, to the art lyric of the second Continental

importation, in the Chaucerian era where what are of "great interest"

to the poet are the "formulas of amplification."[77] In these "formulas

of amplification" Moore points to a purpose behind the pursuit of form,

for he concedes:

Doubtless the study of literary organisation, amplification, and orna-
mentation was a legitimate discipline and within limits did effect
stylistic improvements.[78]

This "amplification" refers back to a medieval need, already discussed,

for vocabulary form and technique. As Moore describes the lyric as

"amplified exclamation in verse,"[79] he sees the thirteenth century

English lyric as realising the "exclamatory core"[80] but lacking amplifi-

cation. This lack has, therefore, been filled by the fifteenth century,

and it is this sophistication which was presumably one objective of

the earlier medieval literature.

The effort to create language and form in poetry is concentrated

primarily upon the lyric. The companion medieval form, the romance,

usually chose prose. Since, therefore, the medieval 'poem' is the lyric,

it became the prime exponent of poetic form in the new culture.

I believe that one motive for this lies in the nature of the lyric itself, in its stress on the personal identity, the 'I.' This is a theme which I wish to develop more fully in a later chapter, but I wish here to suggest some of the formal problems which may have been involved. Some of these relate back to the Old English language, and therefore, perhaps, to all Germanic tongues. In Anglo-Saxon at least there is considerable difficulty in using a language adapted to the group situation, that is to epic literature, for the personal, elegiac, or lyrical. In the first chapter of this thesis it became apparent how often private situations were defined by group experience and how much of a struggle it was to perceive the personal as anything but an absence of these situations. This is not only a problem of vocabulary but also one of form since the long expansive epic is no longer suitable when only the briefer, more momentary, experience of the individual is available. This is indeed a problem in Panofsky's words of "sufficient articulation," or, more exactly, of appropriate articulation. While the Anglo-Saxon poem struggled with this "articulation" through experience, which repeatedly forced the words into a new context where their different function gradually gave them a more personal meaning, the Middle Ages with their rage for method and "inner discipline" approached the problem from the opposite direction starting, as it were, with the need for articulation which steadily evolved into an analysis of the feelings involved.

It is possible that the personal identity represented by lyrical statement involved not only individuality but also relationship. This

is apparent in the Anglo-Saxon elegy in that the individual is also

concerned with others. Hence the necessity for the group to share in

the individual experience as he struggles for his own experience defined

not only by himself but by his relation to them. It is a comprehensive

view of the lone man which recognises that he lives in a peopled world.

The use of the dual form "wit," we two, which occurs in "The Wife's

Lament"[81] is the most vivid expression of this growing consciousness of

separated but related identities.

These problems of the personal man and of his relationships are

also fundamental to the medieval lyric. It is apparent in the love theme

which is not only private experience but also, as I have implied,

essentially an expression of relationship, between two. But in the

Middle Ages these themes are formalised. They become analyses of the

lover and his lady, of the behaviour of the lover which manifests his

alliance with the lady, of the definition of the other creature who

shares this relationship with him, defining her by shape, posture and

attitude, and from these to the intellectual patterns of the love

relationship, patterns which become the major theme of European lyric

until after the Renaissance. The Middle Ages require the love-theme to

be 'clarified' in the intellect, and, as I have suggested, this is the

fundamental purpose of medieval "patterning" or logic. The medieval

purpose is to provide a clarity for European culture in both language

and structure. This the troubadour lyric set out to do and donated

to its offspring--including the embryonic lyric of England--the formulas

for poetic expression which mean that henceforth the lyric can be

recognised as modern.

J. B. Morrall in <u>The Medieval Imprint</u> claims this seeking of the

personal in relationship as a motive for the development of Christianity,

which religion was, he argues, an answer to

. . .the ancient world's craving for a more deeply personal relationship
of the individual to his natural and supernatural environment than
could be provided by the city state or the Imperial framework.[82]

He perceives the early "Trinitarian controversy" as "a theological eluci-

dation of the nature of personality and personal relations with the

Godhead itself"[83] which implies that even within the divine structure

a clarification of the personal "I" was required. He feels that the

result of Christianity politically was equally individualistic, in that

it led to an "emphasis on personal relations as the basis for all social

institutions."[84]

This tendency is complicated, however, by the search for form,

which is as true of the society as a whole as of the literature. The

Middle Ages are much preoccupied with laws, institutions, patterns of

thought, and economic, military and landholding systems. This is also

an attempt to find a rhythm, but this time a social one. Yet this

search for form has the paradoxical effect of making the personal truly

impersonal. This can be seen in the matter of relationship and identity

themselves in that the Middle Ages seek to define not what is personal

to man or woman, but what characterises them as knight, lover, lady,

poet.

This increase of impersonality as a result of the communal objec-

tives of the Middle Ages can also be illustrated from the statues in the

cathedral. Rowland says of these that in their "geometric arrangement" and in that "their postures are uniform" they "have little individuality." He claims that "they are not meant to be seen as real people" but rather to "symbolise the soul of Christianity."[85]

In addition there is about them "an air of otherworldliness" accentuated by an "isolation in empty space,"[86] which might describe relationship as a whole within the medieval courtly love theme in that, according to Frings, "the common language of love" has been replaced by "an artificial society language."[87] Thus although courtly love is a search for personal relationship, what it achieves is, as Morrall argues, an "idealization" which widens "the gulf between the sexes" so that the two lovers become "symbolic expressions of the renunciation or affirmation of sexual forces."[88] This is an opinion which much of the discussion on the lovers and their relationship in previous chapters would tend to confirm. What is lacking is "the possibility of friendship and psychological community between the sexes" which could be produced only by seeing "the lovers as two individual persons."[89]

All this implies that the personal existence so craved by the Christian concept and pursued by the Middle Ages is, in fact, subordinated to an overwhelming impersonality. This impersonality might be derived from the fundamentally non-human spiritual reality which governs medieval objectives. But is is also due to the communal nature of these objectives. Through definition and sophistication of thought, feeling, psyche and language, form is given to a society as a means of organising it. The Western European "organism" is being formulated as a secular clarification.

This secular clarification cannot, however, be self-sufficient in the Middle Ages. The ultimate quest of the medieval world has been defined by Augustine as the search for the "mirror of all-being"[90] found in God. Therefore any secular formulation must always seek a spiritual principle, for the secular world must also be assumed into this world of "all-being." Thus it must always finally be ordered by a divine clarification.

What Augustine requires is the unrelenting effort to discover the identity not only of the individual, but also of the society, in the reality of God. This is the means by which the "world within" will be revealed in this human life. This revelation will mean that an earthly 'reality' will be established. This "reality" will be the true clarity or order, for it will be divine.

This is the resolution sought by the Middle Ages. They certainly not only explore the "world within" but do so in order to clarify or find 'reality' in it. This might be argued by the recurrence of the mandala in medieval literature, for the mandala is the term Jung applies to the "archetype of inner order."[91]

Jon Whyte in his study argues that "the first of these mandalas . . . is the garden setting."[92] This 'garden' mandala relates the quest for order to the spring season which has presided over the concept of the Middle Ages I have presented. Spring is the "garden setting" and is related also to the idyllic gardens of the Elysian fields, Eden and Paradise, which are themselves not only "a place of heart's desire"[93] but also a psychic dream of order, of immortality and bliss, which will

make visible the "claim" of man's soul. Such a mirror as a dream of

an idealised garden is met in the <u>Roman de la Rose</u> where are seen:

> Flowers and trees, whate'er the garden holds –
> Transfigured, as it seems.[94]

Spring as a landscape, however, is an image of place, and place

itself takes on another characteristically medieval image in this

search for inner order. Whyte claims that in <u>Pearl</u>:

. . . the spectacular description of the heavenly Jerusalem should be
identified as one of the greatest verbal mandalas in literature.[95]

With this Jung agrees, frequently referring to that inner order that the

City represents, and the vision of St. John together with the miraculous

sense of harmony figured in the City in Traherne's Meditations, both

support his view; as also do the identification of the medieval cathedral

with the City and Augustine's objective for society as a City of God,

both of which I wish to discuss at greater length in order to substan-

tiate this City image and through it to draw together the personal,

social and spiritual resolutions.

Clarification of the Divine

The concept of place which most clearly defines the natural and

supernatural orders is that of a City of God, first given a philoso-

phical structure by Augustine. He distinguishes between an earthly

city and a heavenly:

The earthly city which, does not live by faith, seeks an earthly peace,
and the end it proposes in the well-ordered concord of civic obedience
and rule, is the combination of men's wills to attain the things which
are helpful to this life.[96]

This city is firmly planted within the natural world. The heavenly

city which he then defines also has an existence, and a necessary one,

within the natural world:

The heavenly city, or rather the part of it which sojourns on earth
and lives by faith, makes use of this peace only because it must, [97]
until this mortal condition which necessitates it shall pass away.

The one significant distinction between the two made here, however,

is that the heavenly city is not subject to the mortality which

defines and limits its earthly counterpart. In Augustine's vision

there is also an opposition which he makes clear in the comparison

of the cities of Jerusalem and Babylon:

Two loves make up these cities: love of God maketh Jerusalem, love of
the world maketh Babylon. Therefore let each one question himself
as to what he loveth, and he shall find of which he is a citizen; and
if he shall have found himself to be a citizen of Babylon, let him root
out cupidity, implant charity, but if he shall have found himself a [98]
citizen of Jerusalem, let him endure captivity, hope for liberty. . . .

Here there is also a question of choice between opposing structures.

The choice is a question of freedom from mortality, that is expressed in

the world "liberty" and in the view of the citizen of God as being a

captive during life. Basically however it is a distinction between "love

of God" which "maketh Jerusalem" and "love of the world"[99] which makes

Babylon. This leads to the clearest opposition between the two: "Babylon

is interpreted confusion, Jerusalem vision of peace,"[100]

Augustine's purpose, in the fifth century, was obviously conditioned

by the loss of the earthly city of Rome as centre for that "well-ordered

concord of civic obedience and rule." It is his genius to turn the loss

of Rome to good account for Christian purposes by defining the loss of

the earthly city as a gain to the heavenly one. It is this concept

of a heavenly city that he bequeathes to the Christian order

struggling for definition. Although the Carolingian Renaissance may

attest to the enduring vitality of the need to make this spiritual

vision a reality, such definition saw little hope of realisation in

terms of this world during the long centuries that followed. This need,

however, remains a pressure behind the medieval world and Augustine

already envisages the solution: "That City of God is called Sion;

the Church therefore is Sion."[101] Therefore, "What is the City of God,

but the Holy Church?"[101] It is this vision that the medieval world, that

world post-1100, manages to effect both politically and spiritually,

although the Middle Ages differ from the ages preceding them only in

their effectiveness not in the newness of their desire.

The vision of the City of God as the living Church must also

be effected physically. This is the aim of the cathedral builder as

is noted by at least two commentators on Gothic architecture:

In his _Speculum de mysteriis ecclesiae_ Hugh of St. Victor says, "The
Church in which the people come together to praise God signifies the
Holy Catholic Church which is built in heaven of living stones." The
material sanctuary is regarded as a type of the spiritual sanctuary,
the City of God, the Heavenly Jerusalem.[102]

The cathedral therefore

. . . moved into the status of an icon, for it shared the nature of
the sacred reality which lay beyond it.[103]

Of this building Suger can say that it is

. . . some strange region of the universe that neither exists entirely
in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of heaven.[104]

Hofstatter claims that gradually this cathedral became an expression of

a heavenly vision:

As builders gained increasing mastery of the technique of vaulting,
churches took on the form of a heavenly city, an embodiment of the
apocalyptic vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem as set down by Saint John
the Divine in his Revelation.[105]

He also argues that:

. . . it was, quite literally intended as an image - and not only as a
symbol - of Heaven itself.[106]

But this physical structure of the cathedral can never be

Heaven for it is always part of the "slime of earth." And Augustine

obviously intends a city of spiritual dimensions built of his concept

of a community of men forming the living stones of a city whether earthly

or heavenly. So to him the City of God is a community of souls:

This is being built "as a city," for they who enter it are like living
stones. . . .[107]

This means that:

. . . since a spiritual building hath some resemblance to a bodily
building, therefore it "is building as a city."[108]

St. Augustine is therefore only drawing parallels that have "some

resemblance" compelled by that earthly city of Rome to his analogies.

Yet the medieval vision of the spiritual order does in fact transcend

the physical fact of the building and uses an architectural ordering of

space to make the supernatural world a place. The source of this is

already apparent in Augustine in that other city to which he turns to

picture the divine world, Jerusalem. As has been suggested, Jerusalem

defines the Heavenly Church of the Middle Ages rather than Rome and it

does so because Jerusalem has already been translated into a spiritual

reality by St. John in Revelation:

And the building of the wall it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall were garnished with all manner of precious stones.[109]

It is the image of the Heavenly Jerusalem which the Middle Ages adopt to represent that "celestial city."

This image is presented in full as the final crisis of the dream vision of Pearl

> As John deuysed ȝet saȝ I þare:
> þise twelue degres wern brode and stayre;
> þe cyté stod abof ful sware,
> As longe as brode as hyȝe ful fayre;
> þe streteȝ of golde as glasse al bare,
> þe wal of jasper þat glent as glayre;
> þe woneȝ withinne enurned ware
> Wyth alle kynneȝ perré þat moȝt repayre. (1021-28)
>
> Such lyȝt þer lemed in alle þe strateȝ
> Hem nedde nawþer sunne ne mone.
>
> Of sunne ne mone had þay no nede;
> þe self God watȝ her lombe-lyȝt,
> þe Lombe her lantyrne, wythouten drede;
> þurȝ hym blysned þe borȝ al bryȝt.
> þurȝ woȝe and won my lokyng ȝede,
> For sotyle cler noȝt lette no lyȝt. (1043-50)[110]

This picture not only repeats the vision of St. John, but is also a concentrated statement of the light which has irradiated the medieval world. This is light at its source, however, that which makes the physical structure of the City of God celestial. This is to remain the vision of this city in works such as Paradise Lost and Traherne's Meditations. Jung, when talking of a dream of this heavenly city, says it was

. . . something very beautiful and ardently longed for . . . a kind of heavenly Jerusalem, as the poet of the Apocalypse dreamt it.[111]

Today we would call it "a mandala symbol of the self."[112] A mandala

to Jung is a symbol of the transformation which prefigures spiritual

wholeness, that wholeness being God, or Christ, to the Christian

interpretation. Therefore, the medieval world contained an image of

that wholeness as the point of order focussing the whole cosmos, and

also as the goal of every human quest through the natural world.

Although it takes there its clearest shape, such a vision is not

commonly embodied in the city. It is usually more loosely defined as

Heaven, the place which is endowed with all the scenery of the natural

world in its transfigured spring season. This is the most frequent

vision of spiritual wholeness, a concept of the Divinity through an

image of a place. But again the dominant principle expressed by this

image of Heaven as spring, the blessed garden and bower of bliss, is

that of light which Dante selects as the ultimate property of God when

he at last arrives at the goal of his long pilgrimage or quest. Freed

at last of all "mortal clouding"[113] he can approach the "final source

of bliss and light."[114] It is the eyes, sight and vision that take

him as close to the Divine as he can get and this Presence is to him

no being but "eternal light"[115] and "light Supreme."[116] "The piercing

brightness of the living ray" which "doth so transform a man's whole

bent" so that

> But as my sight by seeing learned to see,
> The transformation which in me took place
> Transformed the single changeless form for me

until he comprehends the Trinity in a vision of light

> That light supreme, within its fathomless
> Clear substance, showed to me three spheres, which bare
> Three hues distinct, and occupied one space;[117]
>
> The sphering thus begot, perceptible
> In Thee like mirrored light, now to my view –
> When I had looked on it a little while –
>
> Seemed in itself, and in its own self-hue,
> Limned with our image. . . .[118]

Meanwhile during the approach he has seen the order of the universe

> In that abyss I saw how love held bound
> Into one volume all the leaves whose flight
> Is scattered through the universe around[119]

Thus it is a desire for transcendence or transformation into a spiritual wholeness, which urges the medieval world to the patterns it uses. The need of sight to see beyond the deceiving shapes of the natural world into the divine wholeness selects primarily the image of light which will order and clarify the language and confusion of the natural world, and make radiant the bliss beyond it.

However, this discussion of the City moves us back from the image of place to the quest for personal identity as the source for inner order. When Jung in The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious quotes from The Apocryphal New Testament this oxrynchus saying of Jesus:

Therefore know yourselves, for you are the city, and the city is the kingdom.[120]

it is not only the city which makes the spiritual reality of heaven or order but also the knowledge of self: "Therefore know yourselves."[120] Only in the knowledge of self can the city, or spring garden, or heaven, come into being.

This 'knowledge' begins to suggest the inescapable role of the lyric poet within medieval society for, as he is the poet of the "I," he is the guide to this self-knowledge. Therefore, in him as Narcissus, the way to God can be traced when that way is to a City formed from the "inner order" of the self. In that the City is also the image of the whole medieval society, the lyric role is not only to guide to the sacred reality but also to make the secular world of the court a 'reality' not only to itself but to the "world within" of the spirit.

This role of the lyrical poet is confirmed by the final image of inner order which is not the City but what Franz refers to as the "Great Man" who in the Christian context is "fleshed out in the appearance of Christ. . . ."[121] But He is not only the image of inner order for He also

. . . exemplifies the archetype of the self. He represents a totality of a divine and heavenly kind, a glorified man, a Son of God, sine macula peccati, unspotted by sin.[122]

Christ as the "Son of God" is the image which dominates the cultural life of the Middle Ages. He is both the most perfect 'beloved' and also the perfected lover of medieval culture, as is seen in the "Love Ron."
In this context he seems to function as a further extension of the Virgin Mary but that is probably due to the ambiguity of the poet's relation to the lady who has become but a reflection of himself, an "image of all feminine psychological tendencies in man's psyche."[123] Christ lies beyond this as the final 'secret' of these songs, as the true image of "glorified man." He is the final reflection of the male poet's 'real' persona as "Son of God." Therefore, the "inner order" sought by medieval

society is not only communal as in the image of the City of God, but personal, in that each of those "living stones"[124] that make the City must itself be a "glorified man" producing a truly heavenly city. "Therefore know yourselves for you are the city"[125] is the precept latent in the medieval quest. This means however, that at the centre of the City of God, or of the medieval community, at the centre of both sacred and secular objectives, lies the lyrical 'I,' that vision of personal identity that the lyrical poet is commissioned by medieval culture to seek.

This personal identity, even though spiritual, still requires a resolution of sacred and secular. It is significant that this image of the 'I' as Christ, the "glorified man," does share one characteristic with the lady, this being the virginal image in that He is "sine macula peccati, unspotted by sin."[126] That is, in using himself as a mirror of the spirit, self and society, the lyrical poet must suppress in his 'I' all that is human and mortal. His self must not be dependent upon the world of matter although it is in that world that it has its origin. The lyrical 'I' in the Middle Ages must be virgin or inviolate in order to make of it that being to which the "immortality-claim"[127] of the identity, or eternity, becomes available.

The image of the City of God has confirmed the medieval quest for order as the resolution sought in its codes and systems. This is a quest for the individual figure of man as the centre of a community of men whose bodies are the "living stones" of a spiritual structure.

To such an end love and the pleasing seasons have led. These are not only images, spring of the ultimate and radiant reality and love binding all the cosmos as leaves. They are also necessities to the community, love to hold together the structure of men and the pleasing seasons to define the truly spiritual world they will inhabit in eternity. Thus, clarification is an ideal of a perfected form of humanity and human society. This is the ultimate ordering principle of medieval vision.

I would suggest, if only tentatively, that medieval society is really in search of its epic. It needs a literary resolution of the social implications of all the contradictions it has inherited. If the epic is indeed a statement defining the community then this literary form would have been the solution to the effort to confirm a community made from heterogeneous sources, barbarian and Romance, Christian and pagan. Such an epic should perhaps have been a function of the romance for, in the narrative with epic intention, the literary status of the knight not as image but as an active member of his community might have been achieved. In such a setting the love relationship, the ladies and spring might have had a true and fertile context.

The preceding description of the, primarily, Continental vision does not completely define the Middle English lyric owing to the origin of this lyric in a non-courtly setting and the pervasive influence of a local outlook, perhaps as a result of the popular tradition, perhaps due to a 'bourgeois' audience. Nevertheless, the Middle English lyric does show the main tendencies of this approach to lyrical expression in its dependence upon love, the lady and the lover, in its reiteration

of the spring season, in its joy in the Virgin and Paradise, and its effort to effect the methods and systems. The Middle English lyric, therefore, shares the aspirations of its Continental mentors.

The purpose of the quest for order is related primarily to those themes introduced in the first section of this thesis, mortality, procreation and transience. The medieval vision transcends procreative love and resolves transience by asserting an immortal condition in which true reality is to be discovered. Order is the desire behind this effort at resolution—order as stability which will defeat the dangers of existence. It will free man from the "mortal clouding"[128] by finding for him an enduring and reliable peace. Having been defined as an objective, this peace and order permeates the whole of medieval culture in the recurrent images of spring, lady, love, the virgin, Paradise. Yet the City of God which lies behind them all is that Jersualem which represents freedom from the "confusion of Babylon"[129] which is this human existence.

Therefore, I would suggest that, when the Old and Middle English lyrics are compared, the most significant difference is found in the Middle English attempt to transform experience. The medieval clarification seeks to clarify and transcend that experience to which the Old English lyric is so vulnerable. It needs resolution of that experience because it requires order rather than confusion, peace rather than tension; it needs sublimated and divine rather than procreative love, eternity rather than transience, immortality rather than mortality and Paradise rather than present existence.

CHAPTER X

THE POET AS ALIEN

The clarification sought by the medieval world seems not only
to discover order and stability but also to enclose that world within
a psychological self. This self is apparent in the lyric formulas of
lady, spring, virgin, eternity and Christ in that these are all claims
of the soul or identity. This self is also apparent in the dream
literature where Narcissus finds himself enclosed within his own image,
and in the mystic vision where the self seeks its Christ, or supernatural
form. It might also be detected in the romance, since the lyrical
formulas of lady and spring and lover-knight appear here also, as do
mirrors and dreams. A quest for identity is also initiated in the Grail,
another, and more personal, form of the New Jerusalem or spiritual entity.
Thus man, in the Middle Ages, in his role of lover, knight and lyric
poet, becomes the gazer into reflections, the mythic gazer Narcissus who
appears in Bernart de Ventadorn's "Can vei la lauzeta mover":

> Over myself I've no more power,
> Nor, since she let me see her eyes,
> Have I been mine, not since the hour
> In that dear mirror I did gaze.
> Mirror, since myself you showed me,
> I'm killed by sighs from depths uprising,
> And so I'm lost, as lost was he —[1]
> The fair Narcissus in the spring.

Narcissus is a figure interestingly relevant to the medieval lyric poet
for Narcissus, despite the complex ramifications of his tale, is most
simply, the figure who dies from self-love. His is a figure that depicts,
therefore, the self-absorption of the medieval poet. For the 'I' which
the Old English poet sought to define by opposing conditions has, in

the Middle Ages, become all-inclusive swallowing the world into its own psyche. This is the Narcissus who, in the _Roman de la Rose_,[2] "fell in love with his own face." The death from this self-love of the Narcissus figure indicates the sterility that waits upon such a condition.

The effects of this sole reality of the personal self or "I" can be seen more clearly in the later Middle Ages. According to Panofsky there then occurs a divergence between the sacred and the secular, represented in the mystic and the nominalist respectively. However, the result of this divergence in both cases, Panofsky claims, is "subjectivism."[3] The mystic and the nominalist become "but opposite aspects of the same thing," which is the reducing of the individual to "the resources of private sensory and psychological experience."[3] Like Panofsky, I believe that the twelfth century had achieved a balance of the sacred and the secular in its efforts to relate the divine and material worlds. But I believe that, in establishing both as potentially separate entities, as contraries, this early medieval culture unconsciously enforced the later split. It failed to accept the finite human and its distinction from the infinite spiritual world and did not allow cross reference between the two in a fertile tension; neither between human and the spiritual, nor between human and natural object, nor between individual and society. When the twelfth century attempt to blend all these into a resolved, or clarified, entity broke down, then there emerges the source of this whole resolution "private sensory and psychological experience."[3] Even in the twelfth century the balance maintained is only tenuous for it also is made within the confines

of the human psyche, the Narcissus "I" which controls all medieval perceptions.

In the medieval world the poet's "I" is dependent on the images shaped in an inner mirror of his own mind. This mirror was required by the spiritual reality which separated the poet from immediate experience of the natural world and emptied that world of all meaning except its own divine truth.

As a result the poet's definition of his "I" can no longer be derived directly from the natural world but only from the natural world as reflecting an ideal. This means ultimately that the poet is turned into the gazer into reflections, his own 'I'. This complete surrender to the personal 'I' condemns the lyric poet to internalization. It is for this reason that a psychologist, Jung, has been introduced into this study and has, I believe, proved so applicable to the medieval poetic stance. For the exclusively single identity proves more psychological than lyrical. The medieval poet is isolated within himself having no external being which is fully accepted, whether it be experience, humanity or concrete object, all of which the Middle Ages have made shadows. The poet has no reference other than himself and the ideal by which to make visible or define the 'I' that he seeks to express. This crisis is truly a crisis of identity.

One way out of the crisis would be to turn to the material world, the world of experience which the Old English elegiac poet uses to define his 'I.' Thereby the medieval poet could make his lady into a living woman, and make their relationship real both emotionally and

physically. This is the method used in the Old English period to define the personal 'I' an identity striving to find adequate expression for its perceptions. But the medieval poet, owing to the growing spiritual claims of his culture, cannot use this method.

The medieval poet cannot turn from his reflection to the empirical reality of the natural world, the world of experience, for experience enforces exactly those dangers that the ideal comes into existence to exclude, mortality and procreation. This creature, the living woman, whose realities of experience are fertile with self-discovery for the Old English poet, has, by the Middle Ages, been defined as a shadow, a fatal distortion of true reality. She is a creature to be eliminated as far as is possible from the exploration and definition of existence. For that exploration is to be conducted solely in order to annex existence to eternity by means of the ideal. To such an end experience itself is a danger. Were the lady to become a living woman again, as an object of love, she would reassert that experienced life in its most emphatic condition, as sexual, therefore, procreative and mortal. To concentrate upon her empirical reality would not only distract from the ideal but would also threaten to shatter that ideal.

While in the Old English culture the ideal can be ignored as a definition of the lyrical 'I,' (although it is available for use as passages in "The Wanderer" and "The Seafarer" prove), in the Middle Ages the ideal is obligatory, being itself the definition of existence. It therefore requires that the 'I' exploring existence should also define itself by the ideal. The poet cannot turn to love the lady as woman, for

to do so he would need to reject the only reality the Middle Ages fully accept. On this spiritual side the poet's 'I' has been reoriented to that internal self which is dependent on the spiritual "as it is" and to which actual existence has become a shadow. This 'I' has neutralised its human experience in the same way as has the virgin.

Yet the lyrical poet cannot turn the other way and completely reject the natural world for the spiritual and the ideal. Part of the dependence of the medieval world on the poet's search for his own 'I' lies in the secular role this 'I' performs. It is "in the service of a secular ideal."[4] The poet fills the roles required by medieval society in literary form. His 'I' offers images of itself as courtly lover to his society. To achieve this identity for his society the poet must accept his existence in the natural world; "he is a secular man."[5] The lyric poet's self is no longer personal but communal. It is forced into a social exemplary role from which it should be seeking egress if it were to become lyric in the Old English sense.

This dilemma cannot be solved either, by a mystic lyric, for this is an exclusively spiritual quest and leads to an ultimate assertion of the psychic self as Panofsky suggests. It fails in that it cannot relate back to the secular world to 'assume' that also into the 'clarification' as the Middle Ages require.

It might be argued, however, although this is only a suggestion, that a resolution of the crisis is found by the Italian poets for, while they pursue the search for identity in the divine, they also use the secular image of the lady. This might explain why Dante achieves

the inward journey with woman and love as his guides to the reflection
of God at the heart of the self. Such an argument would also make it
logical that Dante produced what is largely accepted as the definitive
and comprehensive statement of medieval culture, both secular and
spiritual, its epic, in his <u>Divina Commedia</u>.[6]

Meanwhile the lyric poet's self remains imperilled. It has
become inviolate because he cannot pass through into the spiritual
reality. It has also become impenetrable because it is a glass between
him and the world of flux, mortality, procreation actual society, springs
and landscapes, since that world threatens dissolution of his spiritual
self. The dream of medieval culture separates the poet from both spirit
and experience. It is from this enigma of the 'I' that the crisis of
the medieval lyric poet arises. In his unfortunate relationship with
the mirror-dream of the "I" the lyric poet is forced into endless self-
reflections. These are in peril because they are negated by the spiritual
reality and are no longer penetrable by natural reality.

At this "moment of crisis" Narcissus is "prostrate"[6] because he
has become an alien in both sacred and secular reflections. He is thus
an exile. For he recognises that his "I" is not his own, and that it
is not defined by any objective conditions. It has no "solid referent."[7]

Goldin perceives this crisis in Bernart de Ventadorn's "can
vei la lanzeta mover" where he argues, "the victim and his audience
are identical; the lover watches himself."[8] Here the poet recognises
that "Over myself I've no more power," a condition caused by gazing
into the mirror of the lady's eyes:

> Nor since she let me see her eyes,
> Have I been mine, not since the hour
> In that dear mirror I did gaze.[9]

But the true alienation or loss arises in respect to the mirror reflecting him.

> Mirror, since myself you showed me,
> I'm killed by sighs from depths uprising,
> And so I'm lost, as lost was he -
> The fair Narcissus in the spring.[10]

It is not only the relation with the ideal as represented by the perfected and unattainable lady that brought to exile. It is also the inwardness she represents, the "depths" from which the "sighs" uprise; and equally the self within those depths which he must gaze at "myself you showed me."

The exile emerges in "Can vei la lauzeta mover" in its most fundamental condition. Goldin detects two 'persona' in this poem.

For there are two voices that speak here, the voice of the entranced lover who is doomed, and the voice of the compassionate spectator who is powerless, who sees everything but can change nothing.[11]

The exile is characterised not only in the "spectator" figure, but also in the awareness provided by it that the lover is "doomed."[11] Here also, as in the Old English elegy, the poet begins to act as observer of himself and is aware of the sense of loss. This exile the poet himself discovers:

> So I leave her and renounce her;
> She brought me death, with death I answer,
> Since she'll not have me, I'll go from her,
> Wretched, exiled, I know not whither.[12]

Here the images of exile accumulate, particularly in the feeling of belonging nowhere, "I know not whither"[12] for he is truly "en issilh" (in exile).[12] He is also "wretched."[12] In addition it is an exile

enforced within the context of his known social world, for it is love
he will renounce, love which is the principle of the courtly medieval
culture.

This position is also to be found in "Lenten ys come" (<u>Oxford</u>,
81), where the poet is also excluded by love in that he fears it will
not select him:

> Ichot ycham on of þo,
> for loue þat likes ille. (23-24)

This will mean exclusion from joy and the spring, and the social setting
that all this physical garden implies:

> ʒef me shal wonte wille of on
> þis wunne weole y wole forgon,
> and wyht in wode be fleme. (34-36)

In the "fleme," the fugitive, is the note of exile as the result of
exclusion.

This statement is obviously influenced by the English inheritance
particularly in the seasonal associations for the exclusion is another
version of that "winter wo" of the earlier verses, which is also un-
natural in the spring setting. In this pleasant landscape there is also
a distinct, if brief, projection of the poet's personality in relation
to it, for the elaborate description of spring is disciplined by the
poet's mood. It passes from those joys characteristic of the medieval
love setting to the last verse where the word "bryht" (26) changes to
lack of light and then to cloud (31), all accompanied by steadily
increasing and ponderously mournful "w's". The suggestion of the
wretched man therefore conditions the final declaration of potential

exile if love does not choose him. In addition this exile is more active, for it is he who will pronounce sentence upon himself before the lady can reflect it: "y wole forgon" (35).

Yet in this poem the exile has become but a tentative personality, a shadow of that darkness that yields to spring, and he only fragmentarily tests himself by that spring setting. By the time that he has fled the spring and has become "wyht in wode," he has become a meaningless outcast in an unidentifiable environment which makes him unreal. He also is watching himself as a victim but can find no real sense of life beyond that uneasy challenge to the social context. Reference to it does not provide him with a growing, if mourning, identity as it does the Old English elegist, but makes him a fugitive from life.

This aspect of exile becomes pronounced in Bernart de Ventadorn's poem. It is not only in that, as Goldin says, he is "entranced," "powerless,"[13] but also in that the sentence he passes upon himself is death: "He is, in short, going to die, like Narcissus, all alone"[14] and "the sign of his death will be his silence."[14] Therefore, in this poem, "we hear the last words of an exile."[14] They are not, as in the Old English, his first. That is, to the medieval poet to be an exile unmakes him as a poet and only the death of his identity awaits him when his 'I' is alone.

This "death" occurs because the lyrical poet has here truly broken the mirror which reflects him. However, that mirror is also the mirror of his society and all the images it contains, as it is basically to the Old English lyric poet. But the medieval poet's 'I,' without this

social mirror, does not exist:

. . . now that the mirror is broken, the image discredited. Unreflected, he is socially and morally invisible. . . .[15]

because:"The shattering of the mirror has destroyed his life as a

courtly man in a courtly society."[16]

Therefore Bernart de Ventadorn, as exiled lyric poet, truly

says "She brought me death." Nor does this death only arise from the

silence which awaits him as poet once he is so exiled. It is also a

death which lies at the heart of a society whose codes celebrate a

social fulfilment that has not been realised; and also, it may be,

lies at the heart of the virginal self, or the spiritual eternity.

The assertion of a virginal or eternal condition thwarts the true

opponent of death, life. Life means the acceptance of the natural

world of flux with its mortal yet procreative nature. In denying this

life the poet, as Narcissus, has had to condone a world created in

images. Such a world truly "cannot be grasped"[17] lyrically for it has

deliberately divorced itself from the "actuality"[18] of experience, the

sensible world. That is, it is a dream. Thus the poet must perceive

his images, love, lady, landscape and the natural world as the "actuality

of illusion."[18] Love, the principle of this society, judges this act:

"it is Amors who destroys Narcissus for Narcissus annihilates pro-

creative love."[19] It is also mortality, the death that belongs to the

natural world, which destroys him, since in virginity and eternity he

seeks to annihiliate death also. But in so fleeing death by these

images, the poet is forced to destroy life and is therefore really

seeking death. Perhaps the most characteristic tale of the medieval world is, therefore, the meeting with the pursuer death who remorselessly tracks down the human who thought to have escaped him by fleeing. This is the recurrent 'danse macabre' of the Dance of Death. It implies that the vision of eternity, or that 'localized' ideal of eternity in the natural world, virginity, is not a resolution of death but an evasion of it which allows death full freedom. The denial of life expressed in this death theme is perhaps ultimately revealed in the single 'I' isolated in a kind of death within its own psyche. Wylie Sypher in _Literature and Techology_ makes a comment on a later period which also seems relevant to this medieval lyric poet. He defines

. . . a poetry that started by using the object as hieroglyph, then finally obliterated or subtracted the object by absolute thought, . . .

and concludes that

Thought thinking itself is the suicidal poem, a structure of alienated language.[21]

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

Ths purpose of this thesis has been to discover the nature of the Old and Middle English lyrics and to distinguish them from each other. It would be inadequate, however, to suggest that this distinction can be simply 'resolved' as the supplanting of one lyric style by another. Rather, the 'watershed' of 1100 seems to add a new lyrical language to English literature. Meanwhile the old lyric and its experience, and even its language, are not eliminated. At times these stand in antithesis to the medieval concepts as does the image of winter. Frequently they are ignored; it may be as a result of their role as antithesis in the argument once the argument has been resolved, or it may be simply as a result of their redundancy in medieval culture. That is, to a seeming redundancy for, as I have implied, the Middle English lyric at times deliberately proves the older style irrelevant, as again with winter. Nevertheless it would be unrealistic to claim that the earlier means of perception, once discovered and given voice, disappears completely.

As has been suggested, this thesis has only attempted to recognise the gap and to provide grounds for relation between the two lyrics. But, while the relationship so far presented has been primarily that of differentiating, the distinctions so far produced have offered some definition of the Old English lyric mood. It is this forgotten source for the English lyric that I wished to recover. In establishing this 'lyric' as a source I also find it necessary to give some indication of the survival of this lyric mood in the medieval period. The ensuing

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discussion will argue that the Old English lyric mood does survive in
Middle English not only as antithesis and as redundancy, but as contri-
buting valuably to the Middle English literary style and as helping to
characterise that style.

It would not be advisable, however, to seek an unadulterated
Old English lyric mood in this period, but such a mood when it has under-
gone the "sea-change" medieval concepts effect. This is why I have felt
it necessary to distinguish carefully between the Old and Middle English
lyrics. The definition of the Middle English lyric has therefore been
presented as subscribing to the wider European culture characteristic
of the Middle Ages, to show how this lyric is most different from the
Old English. This is, however, unusual, for while this 'medieval' style
obviously operates upon the Middle English lyric it never sums up Middle
English poetry in the way that it might the Italian or French lyric.
The Middle English lyric is open not only to the Continental influence
but to another which is more local. This latter I would call the native
style and this I would derive, partially at least, from Old English.
Much of this discussion will tend to substantiate the view taken by
other critics that this style, as known in the high period of Old English,
was, during the Conquest, delivered to a more popular tradition in de-
fault of its previous aristocratic audience. Yet this is not to argue,
as is so frequently argued, that the Middle English lyric is solely sub-
ject to a popular tradition. I believe that this lyric also preserves
a style characteristic of the earlier aristocratic literature, though
in altered form. That is, I would distinguish between those features

of the Old English 'elegiac' lyric this chapter will discuss and works probably stemming solely from a popular tradition as "Maiden in the mor lay" and "Ich am from Irlaunde."

The result of this argument is to see the clumsinesses of the Middle English lyric as due not only to inadequacies of style or poet but also to an actual historical situation. It is a situation which I have claimed as fundamental to the whole of Europe during this period but one which is, in England, pronounced, for here 'Germania' and the Romance world are brought into open and constructive conflict. Throughout this thesis I have introduced the world of 'Germania' only as an attitude to life at variance with the other Romance view. It has represented an interest in humanity as a social and physical fact, therefore relying more heavily on experience. In this it is in conflict with the 'ideal' which seems to be inherent in the Romance view. The major issue between <u>Germania</u> and the Romance world is thus between perfected and imperfect humanity and between the acceptance or resolution of tension.

In England these two worlds are necessarily seeking a resolution not as an intellectual principle but as a routine of life. This is most clearly seen in the problem of the language in that a Germanic language in 1066 is by the fourteenth century nearly modern English, lacking in inflections, changed in syntax and in vocabulary a hybrid. That this is due to a mingling of Old English and French is clear. How it happened is not, although the work done on the post-Conquest period is valuable and there is a brief but convincing account of the

whole period given by Daiches in <u>A Critical History of English Literature</u>. As he comments English does rise "in the social scale" and acquires "an ease, a skill, and a polish which would enable it to hold its own with French"[2] so that, when commenting on an earlier work (Higden's <u>Polychronicon</u> <u>ca.</u>1350) which claimed that since the Conquest all Englishmen had had to do everything in French, Trevisa in his translation in 1385 says that this "ys seþthe somdel ychaunged" for by this date "in all þe gramerscoles of Engelond children leueþ Frensch, and construeþ and lurneþ an Englysch...."[3] That this language is derived from an Old English origin is clear in that it is English not Romance, and was so seen by its contemporaries. Yet the confusion of its delivery is obvious.

In such fluid circumstances the elimination of the effect of the Old English mood is unlikely. Yet to trace the survival of an actual Old English mood would be equally unrealistic as nothing survives unchanged in the medieval world. Indeed the very concept of medievalism I have presented is an attempt at amalgamation where everything undergoes a 'sea-change'. One essential contribution to this amalgamation is the world of "Germania'. Indeed I would argue that it is the presence of those unresolved but far-reaching and numerous Germanic elements that is the motive for the attempt at integration. The image of 'Germania' presented in studies of medieval "integration" is usually a passive one. Yet in that it is a contribution to the new culture, even though worked upon rather than dominant, it must participate in the making of medieval culture.

This is a generalised version of medieval culture. When it be-

comes specific in English culture, it provides more opportunity for factual study. England of the early Middle Ages was an amalgam of Romance and Germanic institutions, witness the introduction of full-scale feudalism, the retention of Old English kingship and the perpetuation of the Old English legal and financial systems reinterpreted in medieval terms. The problems of this period are already discussed in detail by historians, and they are circled warily by linguists, but they have hardly been pursued at all by literary critics. Yet here, perhaps, lies some clue as to the contradictoriness of the Middle English lyric. It obviously does not subscribe fully to those medieval principles elaborated in the previous chapters although its attempt to do so is evident. Even less does the English lyric retain the characteristics of the Germanic world, which were suggested in the first section of this thesis. Yet if these latter characteristics are seen as transmuted by a new ideal, then they may supply some answer to the Middle English style explaining both its clumsinesses and its skill. For I believe that isolation of Middle English from one half of its origins has thwarted full understanding of this literature. Such an isolation might also explain a further effect, the separation of Middle English itself from the literature that grows out of it, although this is being corrected by modern criticism. Both effects arise from the failure to see Middle English as a part of a continuing tradition which pursues an explicable growth. Undoubtedly the range and complexity of the effort needed to elucidate Middle English language and literature have been a deterrent to investigation and under-

standing of this growth. As D.J.A. Mathew says in <u>The Norman Conquest</u>:

For all the attention that the Norman period has received, its deepest
currents have still not been charted, because it has been studied more
for what it is supposed to have resolved and achieved, than for its
slow and painful manner of achieving.[4]

Although this comment is confined to history and to the Norman period,

it is equally relevant to language and literature for the longer

period from the Conquest to the mid-fourteenth century. This chapter

is a preliminary attempt to provide material for such study.

Before pursuing this discussion however, it seems wise to re-

capitulate the essential characteristics of the Old English style. The

main change that occurs in lyric song from Old to Middle English is the

change in environment, time and 'persona' from a human to a divine and

impersonal form; from winter and the hall to spring and Heaven, from

transience to eternity, and from the exile to Narcissus. The result is

to deprive life of its tensions largely by posing human existence against

that other more real life of eternity.

The simplest definition of lyrical song as understood nowadays

is a short subjective song of feeling. Both the words "subjective" and

"feeling" imply that the lyric is derived from a personal experience

of life. One interpretation of such experience would involve the lyric

in an awareness of the tensions of existence, of love and loss, life

and death, joy and misery, the individual and society. In such a lyric

style, which I would claim is characteristic of the Old English lyric,

man as subject and personal is essentially responsive to, but differs

from, the outer world which is object and impersonal. Both response

and difference must be fully realised. The Old English elegiac artist

is constantly alive to that which is beyond the human, but he will not

take any step out of the human frame. He remains metaphysically unknow-

ing.

> . . . . Men ne cunnon
> secgan to sõðe, selerædende,
> hæleð under heofenum, hwa þæm hlæste onfeng.
> (Beowulf, 50-52)

says the poet of Scyld's corpse. Equally Edwin's counsellor in Bede

comments on the afterlife as a darkness which Christianity may serve to

make more comfortable but whose nature it will not alter. Thus to the

Old English poet time is presented always as it is to the human exper-

ience and body.

Behind this attitude lies a recognition of the contradictory

necessities of man's fate. It is a recognition which acknowledges the

barrier between man himself and the outer world, and the death which

divides his being from any other kind of existence. It accepts essen-

tially the idea that "what cometh after, or what went before, we know

not".[5] This allows a necessary respect to nature and the afterlife as

separate from man in their non-human being. It also demands that the

poet must remain fully personal and human himself. Such a clear and

basically empirical distinction between man and all that does not belong

to his existence is a simple but solid foundation for man's human and

personal experience. That experience then becomes the mode, the means

by which identity expresses itself.

This is the experience which enables this Old English poet to

perceive clearly the meaning of the loss of his society to him. He, as

the Wanderer, is aware of the effect of loss of kin:

> oft earmcearig, eðle bidæled,
> freomægum feor feterum sælan (WAN, 20-21)

and of friends:

> Nis nu cwicra nan
> þe ic him modsefan minne durre
> sweotule asecgan. . . . . (WAN, 9-11)

and of lord:

> sohte sele dreorig sinces bryttan,
> hwær ic feor oþþe neah findan meahte
> þone þe in meoduhealle min mine wisse,
> oþþe mec freondleasne frefran wolde,
> weman mid wynnum. (WAN, 25-29)

Thus he has encompassed all that which makes society as a collection of humans, and is able to summarise his losses as homelessness, inability to share his feelings or thoughts and the lack of status and security. He has, therefore, perceived the need of society to man as an individual.

The situation of the woman who knows loss of "min hlaford" and friends is similar:

> ahte ic leofra lyt on þissum londstede,
> holdra freonda. (WL, 16-17)

She no longer has a shared bond upon which to depend. That bond which was once so secure:

> Bliþe gebæro ful oft wit beotedan
> þæt unc ne gedælde nemne deað ana. (WL, 21-22)

is now broken: "Eft is þæt onhworfen". She also knows the loss of the necessary physical experience of her emotional relationships

> . . . . Frynd sind on eorþan
> leofe lifgende, leger weardiað. (WL, 33-34)

Like the man, therefore, she too lacks friends and security, and the
physical and emotional rewards of relationship.

It is this clear definition of their actual experience that en-
ables these Old English poets to perceive exactly what their indivi-
duality or lone condition can mean. This differs from the medieval
poet who has lost this experience. He no longer has what Moore calls
"solid referents".[6] This is because the natural world which contains
such referents is an illusion. Its deception arises from its transient
and mortal nature. Therefore the medieval poet is not only denied con-
crete objects and the full experience of relationships but also that
full awareness of his own human condition which is to the Old English
poet the most fertile "referent" for his own "I". It is in the percep-
tion of death, mortality, the broken bonds of love, all that the tran-
sience of the natural world means, that the personal existence of the
Old English poet begins to gain substance. Thus, it is the juxtaposition
of his own image in the feasting society of the past with that image in
its present loneliness on the dark seas that makes him most aware of
transience; and also of what that image, 'persona' or being that inhabits
both episodes, was and is.

It is only the fully lyric man who can formulate the meaning of
this transience to himself for he has become observer of his own ex-
perience. Therefore when he meets his kinsmen again through memory,

ponne maga gemynd   mod geondhweorfeð;
greteð gliwstafum,   georne geondsceawað
secga geseldan. (WAN, 51-53)

he discovers, as they "Swimmaþ on weg" (53), that they are no more

than memories. He is provoked to an attempt to understand what has

happened to him. The result is the passage defining the experience

of transience:

> Hwær cwom mearȝ? hwær cwom mago? hwær cwom maþþumgyfa?
> hwær cwom symbla ȝesetu? hwær sindon seledreamas?
> Eala beorht bune! Eala byrnwiga!
> Eala þeodnes þrym! (WAN, 92-95)

This is not a definition of transience from a distance which can say:

> þeos þeines þat weren bolde
> beoþ aglyden so wyndes bles,
> Vnder molde hi liggeþ colde
> & faleweþ so doþ medewe gres (Oxford, 43, 13-16)

The Old English elegy does not describe in a detached impersonal way,

for the poet is passionately concerned with a condition which defines

his own life as well. Therefore while he comes to the same conclusion

that life is transient

> Her biþ feoh læne; her biþ freond læne;
> her biþ man læne, her biþ mæȝ læne;
> (WAN, 108-9)

the urgency of his words alone distinguishes his perception from

Hales':

> þis world fareþ hwilynde -
> hwenne on cumeþ an-oþer goþ; (Oxford, 43, 33-34)

The difference arises because the Old English poet cannot, as can

Hales, dispatch this world "Al so þe schadewe þat glyt away" (Oxford

43, 32) for the Old English poet cannot turn away to another and more

"real" condition beyond this life. Thus he is completely subject to his

own experience and when he refers to those of whom "hit is of heom also

hit ñere" (Oxford, 43, 72) as does Thomas of Hales, in the Old English

there is no such comfort as the world being the "false fere" (Oxford,

43, 79) to tell him that their death occurred only because they are

that kind of "fol" that "on hire is bold" (Oxford, 43, 80). Instead he

must define how that time is past "Hu seo þrag gewat" (WAN, 95) that

made them "swa heo no wǽre" (WAN, 96). Therefore, by relying on his

own experience, he is concerned with the questions of time, memory and

mortality, those conditions which for the medieval poet have been con-

trolled. But in being concerned with these issues he is also involved

with defining that experience of his which enables him to perceive

them. He is, therefore, concerned with a definition of being as man.

can perceive it personally.

The woman is also involved in an effort to define what experience

really means to her, through the love relationship as she knew it. No

longer is it a question of a neutrality where her humanity is suppressed

to free her from "times and places".[7] It is times and places that matter

most to her, the time when "Bliþe gebǽro oft wit beotedan" (WL, 21)

which now is "onhworfen" "swa hit no wǽre" (WL, 23, 24); and the bed

they once shared which is now replaced by the "dena dimme", the "wic

wynna leas". (WL, 30,32) Her experience is essential to her, that

passionate procreative experience, "þonne mec se beoducafa bogum bilegde"

(WE, 11), belonging to the "bearer of sexual mortality"[8] whom the Middle

Ages negate. In her concern with this love relationship as experience,

that which also, as with the medieval poet, defined her existence, she

is able to define what that experience or being is, to perceive both

having and losing "min hlaford":

> Wulf, min Wulf, wena me þine,
> seoce gedydon, þine seldcymas,
> murnende mod, nales meteliste. (WE, 13-15)

Therefore, in accepting mortality and procreation, the Old English poet is able to accept the natural world and its conditions which frees for him his own humanity and experience in which to define his lyrical "I" therefore he is able to say with confidence "Ic þis giedd wrece" (WL, 1) for it is his "sylfre sið" (WL, 2).

Whereas to the medieval poet the tensions of experience and objective reality in the natural world are denied him and his "I" cannot become visible except as in a mirror which reflects only his "own face",[9] to the Old English poet the natural world and its realites are substantial "referents" for his "I" continually testing it and forcing it to emerge. It is in this relationship with the outer world that the Old English poet's "I" becomes real to him.

Equally the society of the Old English poet becomes an objective reality to him and he is compelled to examine that society and to define the boundaries between it and himself. Meanwhile the medieval poet, closed within the reflections of that society, its dream, is dependent upon it for he cannot distinguish it from himself. Therefore, without society the medieval lyrical "I" does not exist and in such a condition only death and silence await him. In the Old English lyric, on the other hand, the "I" which has come into existence by reference to its society finds its identity in separation from it and can begin to speak for itself alone at this point.

Therefore, the Old English exile can feel his way in the world to a new-found lyrical independence because his society already has its own definition, its epic, and he is aware of his distinction from that epic condition. Whereas the medieval lyric poet once exiled, is doomed in truth, for his society is still discovering how to function fully and its need for epic is unrealised. The Old English society provides a substantial but not overwhelming definition for the lyrical poet's "I" while the medieval culture defines that "I" in a comprehensive and arbitrary manner. Therefore, while in the Middle Ages the lyric is dominated by desire of the epic, the Old English can yield the epic to the lyric stance.

The remainder of this discussion will attempt to relate this Old English style to the English lyrical tradition as a whole by suggesting some possible survivals of this style in medieval literature. These suggestions will, necessarily, be tentative but will, I hope, provide some material for further work on this subject.

In the lyric the Old English mood can be detected in a variety of themes which I wish only to summarise, preferring to confine detailed exposition to one subject alone, the treatment of women. However the season, the exile, time and landscape are used in some Middle English poems in a manner more Old English than medieval.

The Old English winter mood is not seen in the survival of the actual season for this latter testifies rather to the ghost of the old culture presiding over the new. In two poems, however, the season is used in its Old English manner in that it expresses a more character-

istically Old English perception of time. The first is "A Winter Song."
(_Harley_, 17) In this poem the season is solely an occasion for the
mourning that arises from the response to transience. In another song
"Mirie it is while sumer ilast" (_Oxford_, 7) the two seasons are com-
bined again but here winter is "come" while summer is "gon". The "while
sumer ilast" (1) makes spring itself no longer eternal but one more of
those transient conditions of existence, one which can yield joy like
the hall. While waiting for the return of the merry season that comes
and goes as do all experiences, the poet is again in a "nicht" that
"(is) long". (5) Here the introduction of spring only affirms an
elegiac perception of tension between the two seasons in their flux.

There are in addition three poems that do not make the leap in-
to receptive infinity. These are "Three Sorrowful Tidings" (_Oxford_, 11)
"Memorare Novissima Tua" (_Oxford_, 13) and "Proprietatis Mortis" (_Oxford_,
71). Although they are warnings against sin and the condition beyond
the grave is a summary of each, and although death is no less of a
dread, life itself in these poems is no shadow but asserts a reality
as fleshly as the thump of the dying body to the floor. This corpse
hauls death back into a relationship with life, although the means it
uses to do so is different from the Old English. These three medieval
poems enforce the relationship between life and death by comedy. This
I consider a significant change in approach. It is as if the comic
compels an unexpected attention to the body here. The vivid and real-
istic, if macabre, laughter of this poem compels man to see himself in
an unexpected light. It does of course reaffirm the disgust for the

natural world of the medieval tradition, but the comedy is an awareness of tension within this disgust, in that the poet must accept the physical fact.

Another tension does, as has already been suggested, produce a recognisable exile within the love theme in "Lenten ys come" (Oxford, 81). It is true that this exile is examining a landscape which is no longer shaped by the Old English heroic loyalties of the hall's crowd but by the love formulas of medieval society, and that these formulas make of him the 'ghost' exile presiding over the new relationships in much the same way that winter presides over spring. However, the exile also exists, if only briefly to give a human content to the landscape and thereby creates a tension within it, for the lover is functioning as an observer in whom both love and exile could potentially be realised, even though the medieval condition means that his exile will only be to haunt the woods of spring.

However, the "derne rounes" (29) that echo in this love song do suggest a more able-bodied exile. The "woweþ" (31) and "waxeþ" (32) are only barely repressed in this song and it is perhaps these which darken the spring skies. Such an exile becomes more explicit emotionally, if less articulate, in the cryptic poem "I Walk with Sorrow" (Oxford,8). Here the landscape the poet moves in is a madness of love derived from passion. The intensity of experience arises to what Moore suggests is the basic lyric utterance, the "exclamatory core".[10] Here an experience of appetite for "beste of bon and blod" (5) is allied with all nature, "Foweles in þe frith / þe fisses in þe flod" (1),

which "mon waxe wod" (3) with him. It is a poem that, despite its
brevity, perhaps deserves more attention, particularly for its intense
struggle for the language in which to express experience and passion.
It is already using medieval formulas "beste of bon and blod" (5),
"Foweles" (1), but is re-forging them in a perception of its own. This
is a perception of the "waxeþ" which, in "Lenten ys come" has been allied
with that love that is licence. In this poem though, waxing is madness.
The struggle for language is too intense and to muscular to be success-
ful, remaining abrupt, uneven, a shorthand, but the intensity of lyrical
experience is felt.

Such a yielding of landscape to personal experience to remake the
landscape's shape, as is found in this poem, is rare in Middle English.
But the effort to find expression for experience is less unusual. It
remains an undercurrent in the Middle Ages but one which does seek utter-
ance, and this utterance is not only that of language but also of form.
This search for a new form is a necessity because the earlier lyrical
form has been so firmly annexed to those medieval codes which, as argued
in the earlier chapters, allow no objective 'referent'. Such a refer-
ence or concreteness has seemed to me an essential of the lyrical style
detected in Old English. Therefore in dealing with this search for a
'solid referent' the ensuing comments will not confine themselves to the
lyric.

In an attempt to 'clarify' this discussion I wish to deal primar-
ily with one 'referent', the woman. She is useful in that she has, as
already defined, the necessary concreteness, in her 'transformation'

into the lady, she remains a necessary part of the medieval scene. In addition she is allied through the _Frauenlied_, to the lyrical love tradition of popular song, which opposes the 'medieval' concept. Such a complex makes the woman, therefore, an interesting means of exploring the lyric of experience in the Middle Ages. She will also, I hope, provide a means for discovering the potential developments of this lyric in language and form during the Middle English period.

Even within the overtly medieval style there is evidence that the lady is not completely idealised in Middle English. As has been suggested there survives throughout these thirteenth century lyrics something of the licentious song of popular wooing. Therefore, in "Wiþ Longyng I am Lad" (_Harley_, 5) the poet claims that he would own "heuene" (39) who "o nyht were hire gest" (40) and the mabition of the poet of "A Whayle Whit Ase Whalles Bon" (_Harley_, 9) to be a "þrestelcok" (51), "swete bryd" (53) is so that "Bituene hire curtel and hire smok/ y wolde ben hyd" (54). There is a certain naive familiarity with the girl in these poems, which is shown in references such as that to Annot who "ioyeþ" with Ion. (_Harley_, 3, 50). This familiarity suggests that the poems are written for real relationships. And it is a reality not only related to the adulterous antithesis, or contrary, to medieval virginity, but to a more practical maturity where maids can become wives. As "what love is like" (_Oxford_, 53) claims, love can belong to all woman "Mid lauedi, mid wiue, mid maide, mid quene" (28).

There is, therefore, a certain memory of the real girl which creates a tension even within the idealised pattern. Or it might even

be claimed that it creates a certain scepticism about the ideal. It is

perhaps this naive ambiguity about the ideal that gives these unskilled

early Middle English lyrics their charm.

Yet even the idealised style devoted to the beloved, is disrup-

ted fully by one 'real woman'. This occurs in one of the more assured

Middle English lyrics "De Clerico et Puella", (Harley, 24) which is

part pastourelle, a conversational form of lyric. The woman here is a

lady and obviously of rank and dignity, but she is presented in the

intimate situation of a conversation with her lover and this gives her

a more realistic presence. It is perhaps the conversational style

which is of assistance to the realism here. Significantly it is the

lady who is the natural realist. It is her voice that breaks into her

lover's conventional "drery mod", a mood caused by love of one who is

"briht so daies liht" (2). But while her form may well be bright her

words have no such grace. Their directness is practically concerned

with assessing the realities of the situation. "Fol" she calls him,

with whom she "bydde" "noht chyde" (9) because " ʒef þou in my boure

art take, shame þe may bityde" (11). Her fierceness breaks through his

meaningless phrases to awake in him a genuine memory of the past:

In a wyndou þer we stod we custe us fyfty syþe; (23)

This memory makes her own "serewe" "newe" and makes love real to her

again. Her lover's sighing pleas then give way to her forthright and

surely passionate, though it be unadorned, surrender.

fader, moder, ant al my kun ne shal me holde so stille
þat y nam þyn, & þou art myn, to don al þi wille? (35-36)

As pastourelle, breaking down the girl's resistance in a dialogue, the poem is interesting in that it differs from the normal convention of the form such as is seen in "The Meeting in the Wood" (Harley, 8) where the man has the authority of rank (In many pastourelles the man is so often the nonchalant knight-poet meeting not the 'lady'but a country girl). In this poem though it is the 'lady' who speaks to the pleading clerk.. It is, therefore, pastourelle using the characters of courtly love.

It is the realism of the poem, however, which is most significant. The concern of this convincing woman speaker is only too practical for she can visualise only too well the consequences of discovery, not in theory but in the clear picture of her family walking in. The equally clear picture of loving, the effect of which amidst the conventional sighs, is so immediate, is even more realistic.

The value of the poem lies not only in its rejection of the ideal surface but also in its use of form. Given speech and two characters, this poet, with unexpected assurance, develops in a brief poem the moods and relationships of the two lovers, and also the words that bring them from arms-length to bed. Compared to the often quoted clumsiness and unsophistication of the Middle English lyric, his skill is remarkable. It is probably derived from the reality of the characters, from the reemergence of the more passionate and convincing figure of the woman, and also, it may be, from the 'dramatic' mode inherent in the speech of the 'pastourelle.

This poem also suggests that the image of woman in the Middle English lyric is not solely dependent upon the ideal or virginal beloved.

The woman who spoke in the Old English elegy, with her dominant and passionate nature and her appetite for physical fulfilment is speaking in this _puella_ and she reappears in other Middle English poems. In these she is the bullying wife, the shrew, whose voracious appetite for life belabours the hen-pecked man. This is the woman condemned by the Thrush in "The Thrush and the Nightingale" (Oxford, 52) claiming that

> Among on houndret ne beþ fiue,
> Nouþer of maidnes ne of wive,
> þat holdeþ hem al clene, (160-2)

for they "wercheþ wo in londe" (163) and "bringeþ men to shonde"(164). These women obviously belong to that condition of mankind that is "vikel & fra kel & wok & les" (Oxford, 43, 12). But the style of love these women know is derived more from the medieval marriage-bed and this it is that makes love "courseþ wiþ kare and hendeþ wiþ tene" (Oxford, 53, 27). It is from the actual conditions of marriage in the Middle Ages that some priests, as in "Hali Meið had",[11] advise virginity as a protection (and, therefore, it may be from such conditions that idealised love is produced). It is the actual condition of marriage that causes the anger that makes the shrew for in "Hali Meið had" the male attack means that "pin heorté in wið þé swelleð of sar grome. & ti neb ute wið tendreð ut of tene."[12] It is perhaps from such a feminine reaction to marriage that the well-documented male 'owl-thrush' misogyny of the Middle Ages arises.[13] These situations appear in the lyric of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with their much wider variety of themes and class range. Obviously neither of the poems next quoted belong to the courtly class:

> A yong wyf and an arvyst-gos
> Moche gagil wiþ boþe;
> A man þat haþ ham yn his clos,
> Reste schal he wroþe.[14]

or the husband who cries:

> If I aske our dame bred,
> che takyt a staf & brekit myn hed,
> & doþ me rennyn under þe bed -
> I dar not [seyn quan che seʒt 'pes!'][15]

But in these later poems where no attempt at all is made to integrate the

real woman with the idealised lady as in "De Clerico et Puella" she is

also, as mortality has been earlier, reduced to a comic perspective.

This comic woman, nevertheless, fills a very real place in the

actual world of the Middle Ages. She is, by this time, an obvious des-

cendant of the woman of the Maxims , of peasant origin rather than of

noble status. (Passages of the Paston letters, however, would suggest

that her domineering nature can find its home in the middle class and

there is little to suggest that such figures as Eleanor of Aquitaine,

at the courts, were so unlike her). Once this figure of the woman emerges

she reasserts her vitality not only in the strength of her appetites,

for it is from such a woman that the 'maidens' of "Joly Jankin"[16] and

"Little Mopsy"[17] are derived; but also in her comic rôle. She also,

as with the grotesque comedy of the mortality theme, gives the lie to

the medieval vision of man as a shadow.

The contemporary of these later women is the Wife of Bath. Yet

that parallel, obvious as it is, perhaps clarifies the problem of medieval

womanhood; and also indicates part of the service Chaucer performed for

English literature. In the Prologue to The Canterbury Tales womanhood

is of two kinds, Wife and Lady-Virgin, or Nun.[18] The Wife of Bath's con-
sciousness of her unvirginal role is constant and aggressive. Her role
is opposition to the virginal. She attacks virginity through the anti-
thesis now firmly established in the Middle Ages, that is by means of a
plea for appetite and generation. She therefore asserts herself as
'woman' rather than as 'lady'. Yet espousing this cause makes her path-
etic as it exposes all she lacks in being denied virginity: she must
forgo the charm, respect and blessedness of the Prioress. Her conscious-
ness of this leads her to reveal the actual condition of marriage and
that revelation is the version of married womankind as it appears in
medieval literature. She presents a compound of the dreaded marital
life of "Hali Meiðhad",[19] of the bullying shrew and also of the desiring
woman who appears in "Little Mopsy"[20] and "Joly Jankin".[21] Within the struc-
ture of the Prologue Chaucer also presents her opposite, the ideal 'lady',
in the Prioress. This figure is examined as virgin, delicate, noble,
revered, yet also trivial, vain, status-seeking and heartless.

It is as if Chaucer had taken the two images of woman the Middle
Ages supplied itself with, and had applied them to the real woman to
see what these images had done to their actual identity. And, signifi-
cantly, it is the comic vitality of the Wife he uses in her story to
examine the ideal 'fairyland' of chivalry and courtly love. And in this
story this world is condemned on the principles of 'gentillesse' and
these principles, as voiced by the Hag, seem to imply a respect for true
identity. Although the real 'woman' also appears later in Gill the wife
of "The Second Shepherd's Play"[22] and also in Tyb of "Johan Johan"[23]

she is here a peasant as might be expected from the often argued lowly

origins of drama. Yet in the drama some spiritual content is given to

these images of crude humanity.

For it is noticeable that all the medieval distancing between

the human and the infinite deprives the human figure itself of much of

its _value_ in the lyric. In the Middle Ages, unless it is idealised,

humanity cannot possess that serious valuable sense of life that can

be found as much in the peasant woman of the Maxims as in the elegiac fig-

ures. In the Middle Ages the realistic figure is not only simple but

comic and crude. This is an effect largely produced, it seems to me,

by separating the ideal and the real but it is also probably derived

from the yielding of the Old English tradition to the 'lower' or

popular 'class' an occurrence which is implied throughout much of this

discussion. It would seem, however, that any operation of eternity

upon the mortal will not only empty the mortal of substance but will

also reduce any substance which persists to a caricature. In contrast

the Old English rendering of the intimacy of the two perceptions, of

the living world of the hall and the dark spaces beyond it, two conditions

which virtually interpenetrate each other, avoids this over-emphasis.

Yet while, as can be seen, the sense of vital mortal humanity

does survive with some gaiety, it also retains in other poems a certain

dignity. For woman does not only emerge in the medieval world as a comic

or idealised figure, for adoration or disgust. She is also ennobled as

the suffering Mother of God. I have established the appearance of this

woman in the medieval pattern, as she who must undergo the labours of

suffering and death as a substitute for childbirth pain. These labours
are necessary for the assumption of full womanhood. This is, therefore,
the fundamental Christian message of the experience of humanity as known
by Christ. In these poems this Christian meaning is experienced by the
woman. Through her the idealised beloved is brought back to earth and
thence the earthbound figure is resurrected.

In this fusion however, the elegiac woman does in some poems re-
emerge. She becomes thus the passionately grieving mother at the foot
of the Cross. Here is the grief of the human response to experience:

> im dede is modres sorwe wo. (Oxford, 45, 20)

> Ac nu þu must þi pine dreien,
> wan þu sicst me with þin eyen
> pine þole o rode, and deien. . . (29-31)

> Hise wundes sore and smerte
> Stungen þuren and þurw þi herte (Oxford, 47, 16-17)

In addition the Crucifixion poet chooses a moment of crisis
that is basically elegiac in that it expresses the passion of life at
incipient loss. At this crisis of loss the elegiac poet reappears in
his intense awareness of the living body vitally expressing its meaning
and identity, although the dark outside imbues every work spoken. This
is the moment of the lord's death again but now preceding the reception
of the dark earth. The Wanderer's grieving figure is embodied in the
mourning mother who on this occasion participates in the anticipation of
loss rather than in the memory of it. Hers is again a being within the
context of the hall, the 'bournes' of existence, and a perception from
within that confine of the "undiscovered country"[24] that "cometh after"[25]

of which, empirically, we know nothing. In this position humanity is no longer isolated from its experience, and from that experience it can again derive a fuller sense of self than has been provided by the mirrored self of the more conventional medieval lyric.

This aspect of Mary is also identified with the elegiac figure because,in these Crucifixion poems,the noble woman is not addressed but speaks herself. As with the elegiac woman the mother in "Dialogue between Our Lady and Jesus on the Cross" is not only given experience as well as soul but also has voice in which to express herself. This speech often attains a direct simplicity:

> 'Sone, hou miȝtte ich teres werne?
> I se þine blodi woundes herne
> From þin herte to þi fot.' (Oxford, 49, 16-18)

The speech grows in intensity through repetition with variation

> 'Sone, I se þi bodi I-swonge,
> þine honde, þine fet, þi bodi I-stounge;
> Hit nis no wounder þey me be wo.' (22-24)

until it achieves the realistic effect of experience "þine pinen bringeþ to þe grounde," and "I deye almest, I falle to grounde," (53) which produces the simple heartfelt cry "Let me dey bifore" (36). Thus, in speaking, the woman again becomes a direct projection of the poet as was the earlier woman. In thus creating her, the poet must imagine her experience, not analyse it. He must not describe but must make her speak. And what she speaks of must appear as "real" experience.

A personality such as this is the inheritance of the Germanic heroic woman. Barlow writes in The Norman Conquest: "In Anglo-Saxon Society women were held in typical Northen respect".[26] Her appearance

in the Anglo-Saxon epic is subdued to the demands of the narrative; but
this personality is more apparent in the epic lays of Old Norse, the
Edda poems. These were written down about the twelfth century in Ice-
land but originated in older Scandinavian material from the fourth to
the eighth century. The lyric strain in these poems has often been noted.
It is due not to an elegiac character as in the Old English, but to the
preservation of the short song structure and also to the passionate
realisation, within the limits of these short songs, of personality and
motive. This may suggest incipient drama as well as lyric. Women are a-
mong the significant protagonists of this epic material and indeed the
figure of Brynnhilde provides much of its attraction in later centuries.
She is an overwhelming expression of an heroic woman in whom public and
private lives are integrated. Gudrun shares much of her character.

In the "Brot af Sigurðarviðo"[27] it is Brynnhilde's grief for
Sigurð that dominates the whole song

> Then Brynnhild laughed - and the building echoed -
> Only once, with all her heart
> . . . .
> Brynnhild awoke, the daughter of Buthli,
> The warrior's daughter, ere dawn of day:
> "Love me or hate me, the harm is done,
> And my grief cries out, or else I die."
>
> Silent were all who heard her speak,
> And nought of the heart of the queen they knew,
> Who wept such tears the thing to tell
> That laughing once of the men she had won.[28]

Equally passionately does Gudrun, the widowed wife, grieve for the same
Sigurð:

> Then did Guthrun think to die,
> When she by Sigurth sorrowing sat;
> Tears she had not, nor wrung her hands,
> Nor ever wailed, as other women.

>   Grieving could not   Guthrun weep,
>   Such grief she had   for her husband dead, [29]
>   And so grim her heart   by the hero's body.

Frings argument in "Minnesinger und Troubadours" tends to see a similar cross-breeding of lyric and epic in the Frauenlied in that they embody a "lyric-epic form [i.e. lyric with epic continuity]".[30] That is, he stresses the speech and action of these Frauenlied origins of the lyric. In this "lyric-epic" form "the epic-centre is first, the beginning."[32] Thus Frings' argument seems to suggest that the Frauenlied shares the tension between the epic and lyric that I have argued for the Old English elegy. Both might be summed up in his own words on this hybrid that thereby "epic sharpness is combined with lyric depth."[32]

Like Frings, Dronke in The Medieval Lyric[33] also recognises the "narrative setting" of the woman's song and detects it also in "Wulf and Eadwacer." He implies that this gives an impersonality which might be equated with Frings "epic sharpness". When associating the Old English woman's song with the Latin poem from the Cambridge songs "Levis exsurgit Zephirus", he argues that although both poems are "deeply personal" this does not, in the lyric, imply

the revelation of private experience, but rather the realisation of a persona, that is, the attainment of a certain dramatic objectivity. If the personal element here were only subjective, the result would be less a work of art than an embarassment: the authenticity lies not in "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling" (which may or may not be present) but in the strength of imaginative projection.[34]

This 'persona' is also implicitly accepted by both Spitzer and Frings when they agree that a man may as easily have composed these "women's songs". Spitzer in "The Mozarabic Lyric and Theodor Frings' Theories",[35] says:

We owe primeval lyricism to men, who have ever known how to <u>impersonate</u> their own passion in the form of woman's desire.

Frings stresses the male singer of the lyric as when talking of Walther's woman's song "all put there by the poet, a man."[36]

The epic blend in the lyric, as also the use of a 'persona,' both suggest the need for an impersonal element to the lyric, not only for its origin but also for its expression. Such an interweaving of personal and impersonal returns to combining of external and internal, private and public that I have suggested as characteristic of the native English lyric.

The <u>Frauenlieder</u> belong to the tradition of the public appearance of woman like that found in the Old Norse tradition rather than to the more discreet role of the woman in the epic. In the Old Norse tradition woman participates in an intense personal drama to which whole songs are devoted. This passionate woman singer, openly offering love fulfilled and as wholeheartedly mourning its loss, always responding to crisis and always personal, belongs to all that is lyrical in the Germanic tradition.

It is significant that the Old Norse tradition contains that lyric-epic quality that Frings requires for the mixture of sharpness and depth. The short Eddic songs develop the epic situation concisely, by concentration of personality, and they require emotional response as well as action. Therefore, while dealing with epic narrative material and group figures in group situations, the Elder Edda have already moved beyond (or maybe have not yet achieved) the sustained public expression of communal aims that the epic requires and, therefore, it includes something

of experience as it occurs to the heroic personality engaged in the action.

Yet it should also be noted that the personality brought to life by the heroic struggles of the Edda, cannot yet speak at the emotional crisis. Thus Brynnhild "laughed" and her personal crisis is shown in that laughter for it was "Only once, and with all her heart", so that "building echoed".[37] And Gudrun also is silent "so grim her heart by the hero's body" that

> Grieving could not Gudrun weep,
> So sad her heart, it seemed, would break[38]

The literary "objective correlative" as it were, of these songs is drama.

It is action -- either laughter, silence or death -- which tells of the total being revealed by the situation. Speech is merely an elaboration of what this action has known, not a means of knowledge. Such a dumbness is also indicated in the mute passions of the Old English Maxim where the welcome and the washing of his clothes are active expressions of the woman's deeper emotions which are thus movingly, but inarticulately, revealed. The lyrical language, the expression of the self in speech verse and song, has yet to be forged. Therefore the women of the Edda do not sing easily.

This struggle for language can be seen in the song of Gudrun when the heroic woman's ritual formulas for widowhood are presented to Gudrun by Herborg yet are inadequate as "The way to comfort the wife so young" although they are "wisdom".[39] A second comforter advises action:

> Look on thy loved one, and lay thy lips
> To his as if yet the hero lived[40]

With this action, characteristically, the silent mourner is relieved and she weeps. At this point she is able to sing the song of her own, not other women's, sorrows. She remembers Sigurð as lover then:

> . . . . . .
> As the spear-leek grown above the grass,
> Or the jewel bright borne on the band
> The precious stones that princes wear[41]

and in the next image perceives herself grieving:

> As little now as the leaf I am
> On the willow hanging; my hero is dead[41]

The metaphors of the withering leaf and the spear-leek have given her voice in the manner of the Frauenlied. Nevertheless it is still action that remains most expressive, her stooping to kiss which allows the tears to fall. Of both queens of the Edda it can truly be said that "nought of the heart of the queen they knew,".[42] Certainly they cannot be known from their words as they may be in the two lyrical elegies of the Old English women.

It is from the woman's song of the Frauenlied, loosed from the epic structure, and from the elegiac language of the exile which arises from the loss of that structure, that the Germanic lyrical formulas arise. Yet these lyrics remain distinctive for their consciousness of their epic source. This appears not so much in the overt relation to the epic as in the need for "epic sharpness"[43] that Frings detects. This is most easily translated as the need for an impersonality to the personal statement; a need for the objective to define the subjective; a recognition of the public to balance the private. Throughout the discussion of Old English literature it has been argued that this "sharpness" has been

retained by an awareness of the group which has been lost. Yet this im-
personality has also related itself to the external and objective and can
then be defined either in Moore's words, as the need for a "solid refer-
ent"[44] or, in Dronke's words, as the adoption of a 'persona' both of
which could be traced in the Old English elegy. The description of the
Middle English lyric provided in this thesis has implied that the "solid
referent" and the 'persona' have become redundant in this later period
owing to the pursuit of a different lyrical style. I have also argued
that this pursuit thwarted the Old English lyrical style although the
latter does survive in the poems discussed in this last chapter. However,
it does not seem to me that these are the only means left for releasing
the Old English lyrical perception, as it has here been defined. As
suggested earlier, I believe that this native lyrical style may have
been diverted to a new 'form' and may have survived by this means.

This new form I would relate back to those characteristics of
"epic sharpness" argued by Frings and Dronke, the narrative and conver-
sational elements, the action, and the translation of impersonality into
a 'persona'. These can be seen in the dialogue, story setting and events
of the pastourelle and Crucifixion poems. These elements seem to give
satisfactory expression to a lyrical voice more recognisably Old English
than medieval. And all would tend to imply that the natural channel for
Old English lyric tensions is the drama. This is a conclusion implicit
also in the comic visions of the less courtly songs, a vision which
locates itself most securely in the popular drama.[45]

This dramatic development is inherent in the original Old English
elegies for, in the poet's close intimacy with the identity adopted for
the poem, an intimacy objectively embodied in the speech of the 'persona',
they are closest to what we would now call the dramatic monologue. The
Old English poet has isolated one identity from the epic context giving
it room to express its personal perception of, and response to, life.
He has produced lyric from epic by being aware both of individuality and
of its social context. Yet, in that the epic has, in its objectivity,
encouraged this lyric to adopt a 'persona', the Old English lyric is
dramatic. It needs to know how that character will voice itself.

In the Crucifixion poem this personal awareness has been given
an even denser and more dramatic texture in that it is not only the woman
but Christ who speaks. That is, the "stond wel moder" is not monologue
but dialogue as Christ answers:

> Moder, do wei þine teres,
> þou wiþ away þe blodi teres,
> Hy doþ me worse þene mi deþ   (Oxford, 49, 13-15)

> . . . . .

> Moder, merci, let me deye. . .   (31)

This aspect of the Old English lyrical tradition is, I believe,
selected in the later medieval period as a means of solving the cease-
less reflections of the single 'I', the exclusively subjective lyrical
self the Middle Ages has imposed. Lacking that social context the Old
English transitional epic world provides, unable to find the truly
spiritual content of his social world, the medieval singer has seemed
doomed to the mirror-dream which is in Goldin's words "the theatre of

his animated image."[46] But he has an alternative. He can make his 'dream' into a real 'theatre' where the 'animated image' can again find its lyrical identity. It can be itself again through the discovery of a defining context, not of society now but of the 'persona'. In being deprived of the lyric as a form the lyrical perception is lead automatically, it seems to me, to the drama where the 'persona' becomes the defining "referent".

This would seem to be supported by the emergence of the English dramatic tradition at this period with its community origins and characteristic concern for human experience within the religious content. This trend might also be argued by the Chaucerian struggle with dream. Chaucer finally defeats the dream in The Canterbury Tales by the adoption not of one but of many 'persona'. It may be that Chaucer's mastery lies in this investigation of the very act of adopting a role, (through Chaucer the Pilgrim), which gave The Canterbury Tales not only an epic (in narrative) and a dramatic (in 'persona') but also a lyric dimension in that its structure also involves the problem of identity, the 'I'. His work would therefore, provide a framework for all the social themes of the Middle Ages, because it did not evade the basic issue of form, as described in the Chapter IX, but rather examined both lyric and epic stances through a new mode. This mode I would call inherently dramatic in that identity now becomes projection in another self (in Chaucer the Pilgrim), although this is obviously to take 'dramatic' in a very limited sense.

A history of the English lyric traced back to a source in the Old English lyric would, therefore, seem to imply that a basically

'objective' approach to experience has tended towards the development of either "epic sharpness" or of a dramatic organisation of the subjective lyrical material. I wish only briefly and sketchily to refer to two episodes in later English literary history to relate this approach to the English lyrical tradition.

The first is the Renaissance in which it is possible to see the lyric confounded with drama and biographical narrative. It seems possible to see a trend in Elizabethan writers towards repeating the Old English poet's relation with society although within a more complex social and intellectual structure, in the reference to experience and in combining the public and private man. But even more can it be argued that the Elizabethans further the techniques of coping with that social setting that I have argued were laid down for the 'native', that is, derived from Old English, lyrical style, in the earlier Middle Ages.

Most Elizabethan poets accept and absorb the medieval condition, as has been well established in recent criticism, but they do so in order to break that condition down. Significantly they do so through experience and rôle-playing. The former position might be seen in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet where the troubadour lover is subjected to a many-angled examination and his beloved is given an earthly reality. Equally this can be seen more overtly in Sonnet "My mistress eyes". Donne's lyrics are a continual lewd and blasphemous, but intensely logical and knowledgeable, attack on the courtly code. Sidney's Astrophel and Stella is a biographical record prefaced by the puzzling "'Foole', said my Muse to me, 'looke in thy heart and write'."[47] Yet in this latter the puzzle

is not in fact, as usually suggested, that of sincerity or insincerity, but
of the combination of the two, for proclaimed sincerity finds insincerity
out. This technique discovers that what is insincerely recorded by
courtly love is the love relationship as experience, what is sincere
is the subject of the heart; and Sydney's own biography of the heart is an
accurate summation of what the introspective medieval lyricist sought to
do with his own "I".

As a means of organisation each adopts a rôle. Shakespeare does
so formally in drama. Donne is the speaker in a dramatic monologue.
Sydney adopts his insincerely sincere "I" as the character of a biographi-
cal narrative. Thereby each discovers a new and defining context which
provides a complete and organised perception of the interaction of ex-
perience and a social code.

With each of these writers not only is human experience examined
but that experience is projected as the "I", the self, as a 'persona',
which then becomes an observer as well. This experience is not, as is
seen in Sydney, necessarily sincere, so long as it is convincing. That
is it must be recognisably and authentically human. The human content,
which has been discussed at length with reference to the Old English lyric,
is necessary to give a "solid referent", by relating man back to the
natural world and his local and timed existence. Experience is not, in
this Elizabethan version, nor in the Old English, necessarily sincere,
nor individualistic. What it must be, however, is a realistic 'probe'.
It must be 'realistic' in the sense of the 'objectivity' of its "I"; and
a 'probe' in that it uses that "I" to examine social and intellectual
codes as well as itself.

Such a position could easily be argued for a later period, the Romantics, together with the Victorian and modern lyric style that develops from them, and indeed Langbaum in The Poetry of Experience often seems to be doing this as when he says

a poetry of experience which is at the same time both subjective and objective in that the poet talks about himself and other things, finding his meaning in neither but evolving it through an interchange and final fusion between the two.[48]

This he claims can be done by the "development of rôle-playing",[49] for the "final fusion" is the dramatic monologue. His argument is much concerned with differentiating between drama, lyric and dramatic lyric. In addition he locates this "poetry of experience", with its dramatic style, solely in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as a resolution of the split between thought and feeling. Nevertheless this reconnection of the theme of experience with the 'dramatic' style, particularly that of the dramatic monologue, is interesting. If the "poetry of experience" is seen as a resolution of the public and private, the personal and impersonal,[50] a resolution which gives rise to a distinctive lyrical style, it is, I believe, possible to see a consistent, if interrupted, tradition of this style in the English lyric. It is a tradition which, in that it is traceable to the earliest extant English 'lyrics', I would argue is a native style.

I have argued also that the blend of the objective and subjective conditions maintains, rather than reconciles, a state of tension and that this is a tension derived essentially from the poet's experience. For I have claimed that the native lyrical "I" defines itself fully by

recognition of what it knows in this life, by empirical conditions, by

sensual and social "referents" and by an acceptance of time and place.

In that this experience seeks to express itself by "solid referents" it

discovers the "exclamatory core"[51] Moore claims as basic to the lyric.

In the struggle within the fertile context of his own experience the

Old English elegiac poet's 'exclamations' at times rise to genuinely

passionate personal song as in the women's comparisons of the satisfac-

tions and frustrations of love and in the Wanderer's desperate cries of

loss. However, I would also claim that in the struggle with this experi-

ence this poet is also discovering a genuine lyrical language for this

"exclamatory core." This language is developed from the opposing condi-

tion, in the case of the elegiac poet the society and the epic form.

This language is made more personal by the projection into a role, in

the attempt to imaginately perceive the responses of this 'persona.'

Finally, in that he refers to experience, this Old English poet

must seek this language in those tensions argued to be a characteristic

of existence. In so doing it seems to me that he is struggling for one

of the most complex but vital of literary styles, that of paradox. This

incipient sense of paradox can be seen in the "swa heo/hit no wœre" (WAN,

96; WL, 24) phrases of the elegies which arise from the responsiveness

of the "I" to the tensions of existence found in change, that is tran-

sience, and from the readiness of this "I" to recognise the conditions

that define him, and their boundaries. While the Old English poet is

attempting to express this sense of paradox only by means of old-fashioned

codes and his own experience, the sense of contradiction unresolved is

present in his song. This perception is one which is fertile for lyrical paradox since it urges him to look for a language which fuses these tensions in an unresolved and dynamic condition. If this style is only embryonic in Old English it is latent there and the effort to realise it can be perceived as successful in later periods, particularly in the Elizabethan, as is argued in R.Colie's _Paradoxica Epidemica_.

My argument has tended towards the view that the native English lyric is a product of experience and that it must find definition within an epic, or social, context. However, it must not be subordinated to this latter for its primary aim is to achieve identity through unresolved tension. If such subordination occurs then the native lyric may well turn to the drama, or to a dramatic formula, since this is a style inherent in it from its inception. The discussion has also suggested that this native style can ally itself with paradox and passion which are products of that experience on which it depends. However, I would repeat that these suggestions are only tentative. They are introduced here as possibilities arising from viewing the English lyrical tradition from its roots in Anglo-Saxon; and also perhaps as deserving further attention. Nor is such a view as I have advanced here intended to undermine all that is later added to this native style by other influences, even within the Middle Ages themselves, but merely to provide some "clarification" as to what that native style might be.

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FOOTNOTES

Introduction

1. Ker, *The Dark Ages*, 5.

Chapter I

1. Ker, *The Dark Ages*, 5.

2. Most descriptions of the Germanic heroic age rely upon Tacitus for guidance and turn to the extant epics, in the case of England, *Beowulf*. Thus Anderson in his review of Old English scholarship in *Medieval Literature of Western Europe; Review of Research* ed., Fisher: "All of the scholars agree on the importance of Beowulf as a heroic ideal," 54. Girvan in *Beowulf and the Seventh Century* concisely sums up the heroic conditions reflected in this poem: "The society described is not only aristocratic and military, it is on a permanent war-footing," 42. See also Greenfield *A Critical History of Old English Literature*, 80.

3. *The Oxford Dictionary*, 237.

4. Ibid.

5. Tacitus, *Germania*, 316.

6. Ibid., 320.

7. Ibid., 316.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 32.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., 320.

12. *Beowulf*, ed. Klaeber, and all following quotations from *Beowulf*.

13. *The Battle of Maldon*, ed. Gordon.

14. "The Finnesburh Fragment" from *Beowulf*, ed. Klaeber.

15. "The Wanderer" from *The Exeter book*, ed. Krapp and Dobbie, 134, and all following quotations from "The Wanderer," "The Seafarer," 143, "The Wife's Lament," 210, "The Ruin," 227, "Wulf and Eadwacer," 179, "Widsiþ," 149, "The Maxims I," 156 and "The Husband's Message," 225.

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16. "The Wanderer" (50-51): "Sorg bið geniwad,/ þonne maga gemynd mod geondhweorfeð."

17. Greenfield in <u>A Critical History of Old English Literature</u> talks of "the heroic-elegiac pattern of the whole poem," 90, also arguing that the "elegiac dominates the second part." Wrenn in <u>A Study of Old English Literature</u> states: "It is in this last portion of the poem, naturally, that there chiefly occur these lyric and elegiac passages which may be compared with such pieces as "The Wanderer" and "The Seafarer", 117. Yet Greenfield also points to the more comprehensive elegiac-heroic tone when he refers to Scyld's burial which "enhances both the heroic and elegiac within itself. . . ." 88.

18. <u>Dana</u>, I, 558, Axel Olrik.

19. Ker, <u>The Dark Ages</u>, 43.

Chapter II

1. Greenfield "The Formulaic Expression of the Theme of 'Exile' in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," <u>Speculum</u>, 30 (1955), 200-206.

2. In this article Greenfield refers to a much wider range of exiles: "Historical figures like Edward and Oslac, Biblical figures like Abraham on the one hand and Cain and Satan on the other, creatures of the Teutonic supernatural world like Grendel, the soul departing the earth, riddle figures like the moon, . . ." illustrate "the variety of exile figures . . . ," 204.

3. Ibid., 201.

4. At this point Greenfield proves himself one of those critics who are ready to identify these poems as lyrics, 205.

5. Ibid., 205.

6. In "The Wanderer" Greenfield argues that the 'anhaga' makes use of almost all the formulas of exile. In this poem the use of the season, the journey and the state of mind coincide. In "The Seafarer" Greenfield claims "a quite different effect is secured" this being "the ambivalence of attitude of the prospective peregrinus" wavering between a "newly resolved desire to seek exile" and "the doubts he still entertains about his projected voyage, . . ." 206.

7. Timmer, "The Elegiac Mood in Old English Poetry" <u>English Studies</u>, 24 (1942), 33-44. This transitoriness is crucial to the 'ubi sunt' theme and is what Gordon in <u>The Battle of Maldon</u> 24n., calls: "the common Old English theme "lif is laene."

8. See note 7, 36.

9. Ibid., 38.

10. Ibid., 39.

11. Timmer also implies that elegies are lyrical: "The Old English lyrics, or at least those poems that may be said to be akin to lyrical poetry. . . ." 33.

12. <u>The Encyclopaedia Britannica</u> cited in Timmer, "The Elegiac Mood in Old English Poetry," 35.

13. "The Wanderer," <u>The Exeter Book</u>, ed. Krapp and Dobbie.

14. Ker, <u>The Dark Ages</u>, 43.

15. <u>Beowulf</u>, ed. Klaeber.

16. The Venerable Bede, <u>A History of the English Church and People</u>, 124-125, (II. 13 in the original).

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Enkvist, <u>Seasons of the Year</u>, 8. See also Curtius, <u>European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages</u>, 185; "Only one dark shadow hangs over this happy world: the doom of death."

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., 14.

22. See note 16.

23. Ibid.

24. The actual situation may be described in <u>Beowulf</u>, 1146-51, which also centres on the "Sǣ-sīðe," 1149.

Chapter III

1. Enkvist, <u>The Seasons of the Year</u>.

2. Ibid., 8.

3. Such a condition would produce the "ambivalence of attitude" Greenfield perceives in "The Formulaic Expression of Exile," <u>Speculum</u>, 30 (1955), 206. (See above, footnote 6, Chap. II.) This would make it unnecessary to identify this 'seaman' as either heroic exile or Christian <u>peregrinus</u> since the two conditions would be fused into one here as a reaction to the transitional state.

4. <u>Beowulf</u>, 50-52.

5. Enkvist, <u>Seasons of the Year</u>, 23.

6. Ibid., 16.

7. Lawrence, <u>Beowulf and the Epic Tradition.</u>

8. Ibid., 233.

9. Anderson in <u>Medieval Literature of Western Europe: Review of Research</u>, ed., Fisher: "All of the scholars agree on the importance of Beowulf as a heroic ideal. In fact, L. L. Schucking, "Das Konigs - ideal im Beowulf" (<u>Englische Studien</u>, 1932), suggests that the poem is a kind of handbook for princes." The same source gives the argument of B. J. Timmer in "Beowulf: The Poem and the Poet" (<u>Neophil.</u>, 1948), that this epic is: "obviously composed in a period of transition between the Old heroic poetry and the monastic literature and therefore not much after 700," 54.

10. Klaeber's comment on this problem is as follows: "That the poem was composed in the Anglian parts of England is one of the few facts bearing on its genesis which can be regarded as fairly established. But whether it originated in Northumbria or Mercia is left to speculation." <u>Beowulf</u>, ed. Klaeber, CXIX.

11. Again Klaeber summarises usefully: "Obviously the latest possible date is indicated by the time when the MS. was written, i.e., about 1000 A.D. It is furthermore to be taken for granted that a poem so thoroughly Scandinavian in subject-matter and evincing the most sympathetic interest in Danish affairs cannot well have been composed after the beginning of the Danish invasions toward the end of the 8th Century." <u>Beowulf</u>, ed. Klaeber, cvii.

12. Stenton, <u>Anglo-Saxon England</u>, 79.

13. Ibid., 80.

14. Ibid., 84.

15. Ibid., 87.

16. Ibid., 88.

17. Ibid., 89.

18. Ibid., 90.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., 91.

21. Such passages may be noted in Beowulf, 905-13, 1724-33, 2706-9.

22. Philpotts, Edda and Saga, 146.

23. Ibid., 145-6.

24. The Poetic Edda, trans. Henry Adams Bellows, 24-25.

25. Ibid.

Chapter IV

1. Beowulf, 2026-29.

2. This position is also argued by one of the Riddles usually accepted as the Sword Riddle, 20, The Exeter Book, 190, where the conflict between the woman and the warlike object is clear: "I can have naught to do with the bride" and "Often I, foolish with ornaments, anger the woman, frustrate her desire" translated Gordon, Anglo-Saxon Poetry, 295.

3. "Widsiþ," The Exeter Book, 149.

4. "The Husband's Message," The Exeter Book, 225.

5. Maxms I, The Exeter Book, 156, 94-98.

6. This is reminiscent of the first meeting of Anne Elliott and Captain Wentworth in Jane Austen's Persuasion, Chapter 7, where a similar emotional situation is also rendered in simple domestic actions.

7. "The Wanderer," The Exeter Book, 134, 95-6.

8. Wrenn, in A Study of Old English Literature refers to it as "this obscure yet intensely moving fragment," 83. The major difficulties are three:
1) The lovers are kept apart either by her own people or Wulf's

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 187.

9. Ibid., 193.

10. Ibid., 194.

11. Ibid., 197.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 198.

14. Quoted in Chambers, The Close of the Middle Ages, 68.

15. Chambers, "Some Aspects of Medieval Lyric," from Early English Lyrics Amorous, Divine, Moral and Trivial, 267.

16. Greene, A Selection of English Carols, 43.

17. Raby, A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages, 326

18. Goscelin's Life of St. Edith, cited in Greene, A Selection of English Carols, 5.

19. Chambers, The Close of the Middle Ages, 69.

20. Enkvist, The Seasons of the Year, 16.

21. Bernard of Clair vaux, Sermon LXXXIII on "The Song of Songs," cited in Varieties of Mystic Experience, ed. O'Brien, 103.

22. Religious Lyrics of the XIV th Century, ed. Brown, "Christ pleads with his Sweet Leman," 78, 94, 1-2.

23. Ibid., "A song of Love-longing to Jesus," 83, 99, 7-8.

24. Ibid., "A Song of the Love of Jesus," 84, 102, 5-8.

Chapter VII

1. Wilson, Lost Literature of Medieval England.

2. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature.

3. M. Dominica Legge, Anglo-Norman Literature.

4. Legge, 332.

5. Ibid., 337.

6. Wilson, 253.

7. <u>English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century</u>, ed. Brown.

8. <u>The Harley Lyrics; the Middle English Lyrics of MS. Harley 2253</u>, ed. Brook. The references in the text are <u>Harley</u>--referring to <u>The Harley Lyrics</u> - and <u>Oxford</u>--referring to <u>English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century</u>. The poems are cited according to the number assigned to them in these texts.

9. <u>The Owl and the Nightingale</u>, ed. Stanley.

<u>Chapter VIII</u>

1. Bagley and Rowley, <u>A Documentary History of England</u>, 35.

2. Ibid.

3. Ganshof, <u>Feudalism</u>, 149.

4. Bagley and Rowley, <u>A Documentary History of England</u>, 35.

5. Ganshof, <u>Feudalism</u>, 59.

6. Brooke, <u>From Alfred to Henry III</u>, 97.

7. Matthew, <u>The Norman Conquest</u>, 247.

8. Ibid., 148.

9. Barrow, <u>Feudal Britain</u>, 43.

10. Matthew, <u>The Norman Conquest</u>, 148.

11. Ibid., 119.

12. Ibid.

13. Stenton, <u>English Feudalism 1066-1166</u>, 249-52.

14. Barrow, <u>Feudal Britain</u>, 27.

15. Sypher, <u>Four Stages of Renaissance Style</u>, 45-6.

16. Ker, <u>The Dark Ages</u>, 6.

17. Ibid., 7.

18. These parallels are worked out in greater detail in the third chapter of Chaytor's work.

19. Chaytor, <u>The Troubadours in England</u>, 97.

20. Panofsky, <u>Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism</u>, 39.

21. Ibid., 31.

22. Ibid., 44.

23. Ibid., 45.

24. Henderson, <u>Gothic</u>, 52-54.

25. See note 21.

26. Panofsky, <u>Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism</u>, 48-9.

27. See note 21.

28. Rowland, <u>The Shapes we Need</u>, 73.

29. "Sumer Is I-cumen In' (no. 6), which probably was copies in MS (Harley 2253) between 1230 and 1240." <u>English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century</u>, Brown ed., xiv.

30. Curtius, <u>European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages</u>, 198.

31. Roger-A. D'Hulst, <u>Flemish Tapestries</u>, 79-80.

32. Valency, <u>In Praise of Love</u>, 131.

33. Roger-A. D'Hulst, <u>Flemish Tapestries</u>, 79-80.

34. Dvorak, <u>Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art</u>, 41.

35. Rowland, <u>The Shapes We Need</u>, 78.

36. Dvorak, <u>Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art</u>, 42.

37. See note 22.

38. Panofsky, <u>Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism</u>, 30.

39. Aquinas, _Summa_, I, q. 14, a. 8, cited in Dvorak.

40. Rowland, _The Shapes We Need_, 73.

41. Panofsky, _Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism_, 66.

42. Ibid., 67.

43. Ibid., 68.

44. Ibid., 67.

45. Ibid., 69.

46. Clark, _Landscape into Art_, 19.

47. Read, _Art and Society_, 28.

48. Clark, _Landscape into Art_, 18.

49. Ibid., 19.

50. Dvorak, _Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art_, 65.

51. Ibid., 45.

52. Henderson, _Gothic_, 93.

53. Dvorak, _Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art_, 33.

54. Ibid., 53.

55. See note 51.

56. Dvorak, _Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art_, 33.

57. Ibid.

58. Clark, _Landscape into Art_, 19.

59. Dvorak, _Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art_, 62.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid., 60-61.

62. Aquinas, _Opusculum de pulchro_, 420.

63. Dvorak, _Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art_, 45.

64. Frank, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," _Sewanee Review_, LIII, 645.

65. Ibid., 647.

66. Ibid.

67. See note 36.

68. Frank, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," 647.

69. Rowland, _The Shapes we Need_, 78.

70. Ibid.

71. Dvorak, _Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art_, 55.

72. Ibid., 57.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid., 53.

75. Sypher, _Four Stages of Renaissance Style_, 39.

76. Dvorak, _Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art_, 53.

77. Henderson, _Gothic_, 173.

78. Dvorak, _Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art_, 53.

79. Ibid., 55.

80. See note 38.

81. See note 26.

82. See note 75.

83. _Pearl_, ed. Gordon, 205-16.

84. John Keat, "The Ode to a Nightingale," _Poetical Works_, ed. Garrod, 208, 38-47.

85. "The Wife's Lament," _The Exeter Book_, 210, 30.

Chapter IX

1. Aquinas, _Opusculum de pulchro_, 417, cited in Dvorak.

2. Ibid.

3. Aquinas, _Summa Theologica_, II-II, q. 145, a. 2, cited from Dvorak.

4. Dvorak, _Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art_, 33.

5. Panofsky, _Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism_, 7.

6. Ibid., 39.

7. Sypher, _Four Stages of Renaissance Style_, 48.

8. Read, _Selected Writings_, 270.

9. Freud, _New Introductory Lectures_, 30ff, cited in Read, _Selected Writings_, 273.

10. Ibid.

11. _English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century_, 60. See previous chapter.

12. Goldin, _The Mirror of Narcissus_, 6.

13. _The Philosophy of Plotinus_ trans., Joseph Katz, (New York, 1950), III, 6, 7, cited in Goldin.

14. Thomas of Hales, "The Love Ron," _English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century_, 43, 12.

15. Plotinus, _Enneads_, I, 6, 8, trans., Stephen Mackenna, cited in Goldin.

16. Ibid., IV, 3, 12.

17. Goldin, _The Mirror of Narcissus_, 8.

18. Rank, _Beyond Psychology_, 256.

19. Dvorak, _Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art_, 42.

20. Guillaume de Lorris, _The Romance of the Rose_, trans., Robbins, 6, 90-92.

21. Goldin, _The Mirror of Narcissus_, 12-13.

22. Augustine, _Soliloquia_, II, xx, 35, cited in Goldin, 7.

23. See note 12.

24. *English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century*, 4.

25. Augustine, *Confessions*, XIII, XV, 18, quoted in Goldin, 10.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Goldin, *The Mirror of Narcissus*, 11.

29. Ibid., 253.

30. Ibid., 80.

31. Rank, *Beyond Psychology*, 247.

32. Ibid., 259.

33. Ibid., 248.

34. Ibid., 246.

35. Ibid.

36. See note 29.

37. See note 31.

38. Goldin, *The Mirror of Narcissus*, 13-14.

39. Ibid., 78.

40. Ibid., 258.

41. Ibid., 237.

42. Ibid., 253.

43. Whyte, *Pearl: A Study in Individuation*, 15.

44. M.-L. von Franz in *Man and his Symbols*, 177.

45. Ibid., 187.

46. Ibid., 185.

47. Whyte, Pearl: *A Study in Individuation*, 21.

48. Ibid., 16.

49. M.-L. von Franz in _Man and his Symbols_, 181-3.

50. Cirlot, _A Dictionary of Symbols_, 201.

51. See note 49.

52. See note 46.

53. Otto Rank, _Beyond Psychology_, 250.

54. Ibid., 251.

55. Ibid.

56. Goldin, _The Mirror of Narcissus_, 239.

57. Guillaume de Lorris, _The Romance of the Rose_, trans., Robbins, 7, 99-101.

58. See note 53.

59. See note 17.

60. See note 38.

61. Rank, _Beyond Psychology_, 248.

62. See note 17.

63. See note 246.

64. Rank, _Beyond Psychology_, 268.

65. Goldin, _The Mirror of Narcissus_, 31.

66. Frings, "Minnesinger und Troubadours," 20.

67. Morrall, _The Medieval Imprint_, 59.

68. Ibid.

69. Ker, _The Dark Ages_, 5.

70. Morrall, _The Medieval Imprint_, 58.

71. Ibid.

72. See note 69.

73. Rowland, <u>The Shapes We Need</u>, 78.

74. Frings, "Minnesinger und Troubadours," 20.

75. Morrall, <u>The Medieval Imprint</u>, 108.

76. Frings, "Minnesinger und Troubadours," 20.

77. Moore, <u>The Secular Lyric</u>, 120.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid., 6.

80. Ibid., 38.

81. "The Wife's Lament," <u>The Exeter Book</u>, 210, 13, 20.

82. Morrall, <u>The Medieval Imprint</u>, 42-43.

83. Ibid., 44.

84. Ibid., 43.

85. Rowland, <u>The Shapes We Need</u>, 78.

86. Ibid.

87. Frings, "Minnesinger und Troubadours," 20.

88. Morrall, <u>The Medieval Imprint</u>, 110-11.

89. Ibid., 111.

90. See note 21.

91. Evans, <u>Conversations with Carl Jung</u>, 62-3, cited in Whyte.

92. Whyte, <u>Pearl: A Study in Individuation</u>, 94.

93. Curtius, <u>European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages</u>, 186.

94. Guillaume de Lorris, <u>The Romance of the Rose</u>, trans., Robbins, 7, 88-9.

95. Whyte, <u>Pearl: A Study in Individuation</u>, 102-3.

96. Augustine, City of God, XIX, 17, trans. Dods, in <u>The Essential Augustine</u>.

97. Ibid.

98. Augustine, On Psalm 64, 2; trans. Nicene, in <u>The Essential Augustine</u>.

99. Ibid.

100. Ibid.

101. Augustine, On Psalm 98, 4; trans. Nicene.

102. Henderson, <u>Gothic</u>, 70.

103. Ibid., 73.

104. Ibid., 97.

105. Hofstätter, <u>Art of the Late Middle Ages</u>, 7.

106. Ibid.

107. Augustine, On Psalm 121, 4; trans. Nicene in <u>The Essential Augustine</u>.

108. Ibid.

109. <u>The Revelation of St. John the Divine</u>, Chap. 21, v, 18.

110. <u>Pearl</u>, ed. Gordon, 1021-28, 1043-50.

111. Jung, <u>Symbols of Transformation</u>, 207-8, cited in Whyte.

112. Ibid.

113. Dante, <u>Divina Commedia</u>, Paradiso, trans. Sayers, XXIII, 31.

114. Ibid., 27.

115. Ibid., 43.

116. Ibid., 67.

117. Ibid., 112-17.

118. Ibid., 127-31.

119. Ibid., 85-87.

120. Jung, <u>Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious</u>, 35, cited from James, <u>The Apocryphal New Testament</u>, 27f., cited in Whyte.

121. Whyte, <u>Pearl: A Study in Individuation</u>, 22.

122. Jung, "Psychology of the Child-Archetype" from <u>Essays on a Science of Mythology</u> quoted in Whyte.

123. See note 44.

124. See note 107.

125. See note 118.

126. See note 119.

127. See note 34.

128. See note 111.

129. See note 97.

Chapter X

1. Bernard de Ventadorn, "Can vei la lauzeta mover," trans. Kittel, <u>Medieval Age</u>, ed. Flores, 178-80, 17-24.

2. Guillaume de Lorris, <u>The Romance of the Rose</u>, trans. Robbins, 7, 43.

3. Panofsky, <u>Scholasticism and Gothic Architecture</u>, 14.

4. Goldin, <u>The Mirror of Narcissus</u>, 258.

5. Ibid., 255.

6. Ibid., 51.

7. Moore, <u>The Secular Lyric</u>, 38.

8. Goldin, <u>The Mirror of Narcissus</u>, 97.

9. See note 1.

10. Goldin, <u>The Mirror of Narcissus</u>, 97.

11. Ibid.

12. Bernart de Ventadorn, "Can vei la lauzeta mover," <u>Medieval Age</u>, ed. Flores, 178-80, 53-56.

13. See note 11.

14. Goldin, <u>The Mirror of Narcissus</u>, 101.

15. Ibid., 99.

16. Ibid., 101.

17. Augustin, _Soliloquia_, II, vi, 11 and 12; cited in Goldin, 7.

18. _The Philosophy of Plotinus_, trans., Joseph Katz, III, 6, 7, cited in Goldin, 6.

19. Goldin, _The Mirror of Narcissus_, 42.

20. Sypher, _Literature and Technology_, 143.

Chapter XI

1. _Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries_, ed. Robbins, 15 and 18.

2. Daiches, _A Critical History of English Literature_, 34.

3. Ibid., 36.

4. Matthew, _The Norman Conquest_, 297.

5. The Venerable Bede, _A History of the English Church and People_, 125, (II, 13 in original).

6. Moore, _The Secular Lyric_, 38.

7. Goldin, _The Mirror of Narcissus_, 8.

8. Rank, _Beyond Psychology_, 247.

9. Guillaume de Lorris, _The Romance of the Rose_, 7, 43.

10. Moore, _The Secular Lyric_, 38.

11. _Hali Meiðhad_, ed., Colborn.

12. Ibid., 29, 465.

13. _The Harley Lyrics_, ed. Brook, 12: "such sympathetic understanding of a woman's point of view [as is shown in _The Owl and the Nightingale_] is rare in medieval literature, which generally knows of no middle course between extravagant praise and violent invective."

14. _Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries_, ed. Robbins, 42, 5-8.

15. Ibid., 43, 9-12.

16. Ibid., 27.

17. Ibid., 32. Also 29, "The Serving Maid's Holiday."

18. Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales, ed., Robinson, General Prologue, 445-76, 118-162.

19. See note 11.

20. See note 16.

21. See note 17.

22. "The Second Shepherd's Pageant," Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays, 81-108.

23. John Heywood, "Johan, Johan," Medieval Mystery Plays, Morality Plays and Interludes, 232-58.

24. Shakespeare, Hamlet, ed. Furness, III, i, 79.

25. See note 5.

26. Barlow, The Norman Conquest, 141.

27. "Brot of Sigurthakvithu" The Poetic Edda, trans. Bellows, 407, 10.

28. Ibid., 408, 14, 15.

29. "Guthrunarkvitha," 412, 1; 413, 5.

30. Frings, "Minnesingers und Troubadours," 4.

31. Ibid., 6.

32. Ibid., 4.

33. Dronke, The Medieval Lyric, 92.

34. Ibid., 93.

35. Spitzer, "The Mozarabic Lyric and Theodor Frings' Theories," CL, IV, 21.

36. Frings, "Minnesinger und Troubadours," 6.

37. "Brot af Sigurthakvithu," The Poetic Edda, trans. Bellows, 407, 10.

38. "Guthrunarkvitha," 415, 2.

39. Ibid., 11.

40. Ibid., 12.

41. Ibid., 416, 17; 417, 18.

42. "Brot af Sigurthakvithu," 408, 15.

43. See note 32.

44. Moore, The Secular Lyric, 38.

45. Everyman would, according to this approach, be crucial to medieval drama in that it applies the seriousness of the medieval ideal to the mortal figure, and dispenses with the comic version of this figure.

46. Goldin, The Mirror of Narcissus, 85.

47. Sydney, "Astrophil and Stella," The Poems of Sir Philip Sydney, ed. Ringler, 165, I, 14.

48. Langbaum, The Poetry of Experience, 232.

49. Ibid., 25.

50. Here note the distinction between the epic and dramatic lyric poet Langbaum makes, 231.

51. Moore, The Secular Lyric, 38.

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